

D O U B T S
CONCERNING THE
Free Navigation of the Scheld

CLAIMED by the EMPEROR,
And the probable Causes and Consequences of that Claim.

IN WHICH

The Views of his Imperial Majesty, and of the Empress of
Russia are clearly pointed out, and the Characters of those
great Potentates are exhibited in a new, and interesting Light.

By the **COUNT DE MIRABEAU.**

Illustrated with a correct Chart of the Course of the
Scheld from Antwerp to the Sea.



L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXXV.

DOUBT

CONCERNING THE

Navigation of the Scheldt

By the Treaty of 1713

And the subsequent Conventions of 1748

IN WHICH

The Views of the several Powers, and of the Treaty of 1713, are explained, and the Navigation of the Scheldt is shown to be a subject of public law.

By the Earl of Sandwich



Printed by W. Woodcock, at the Office of the Surveyor of the Customs, in St. James's Street, 1794.

P R E F A C E

BY THE

ENGLISH EDITOR.

FEW political tracts have done so much honour to their authors as the following, which has been equally admired and approved in France, Holland, and England. Every page glows with the generous spirit of religious and civil liberty, and demonstrates that the Count is the friend of humanity, and a warm advocate for public virtue in the conduct of Princes.

His advice is calculated to promote universal concord and harmony amongst the nations of Europe, by checking and setting bounds to the turbulent ambition of any

of its sovereigns, the moment it is exposed to public view, and thereby preventing those scenes of devastation and cruelty, which are the consequences of unjust wars. Upon this plan, he recommends to the Dutch firm resistance, against the ill founded claims of the Emperor, as the surest means of securing the present and future peace of Europe.

SUCH a tract, therefore, highly merited an English translation, that those who are unacquainted with the French language, and yet are deeply interested in the important subjects therein discussed with precision and candour, might participate in the information communicated by the French writer, respecting the present political state of Europe, and the views of certain great northern powers. Another advantage will arise from its appearance: it is usual for statesmen in every country, to exhibit very flattering portraits of the princes with whom their respective courts are either in actual alliance, or upon a friendly footing. Be-
fore

fore the late war, the Empress of Russia was the reigning idol of the British court, and the nation caught the delirium; but the leading and active part she took in the famous *armed neutrality*, opened the eyes of the public, though the court still continued to set perhaps too great a value on the friendship of the renowned Catharine. As to the Emperor of Germany, he has been so highly extolled from all quarters of Europe, that it seems to be rather a rash attempt, to endeavour to reduce him a little nearer to a level with the rest of mankind, after popular opinion has placed him upon the pinnacle of human glory, and pointed him out as the model of princes. Yet, such is the masterly pencil of Count Mirabeau, that men of science on cool reflection, after reading his accurate sketch of the political state of Europe, and examining attentively, his delineation of the two celebrated characters just mentioned, will probably determine, that he has drawn a more striking resemblance of them than any former writer.

No further recommendation need be given of the original; the English editor will therefore, only have to add an Observation or two respecting some liberties he has taken with the French copy. He found it rather overloaded with notes, and in some of them errors had crept in, respecting the administration of public affairs in England, and the constitution of our marine force, which can only be attributed to want of information. An appendix was likewise annexed, intended to corroborate a variety of circumstances mentioned in the course of the tract, respecting the Czar Peter I. the Russian nation, the character of the modern Greeks, the conferences of Gertruydenberg, &c. but better adapted to foreign readers than to the English, as it consists chiefly of long extracts from *Bruce's Memoirs*, Sir James Porter's *History of the Turks*, and other well known English authors, it was thought unnecessary to increase the size of the English copy, with such extraneous matter.

THE substance of the author's preface is incorporated in this address; and it has only

only been curtailed where it was found to have no connection with the main subject. The conclusion which records the generous sentiments of a French prelate, and their agreement with his own, we here give in the count's own words.

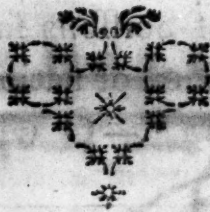
“ BRAVE Englishmen ! remain free, and
 “ be generous because you are free ; love
 “ and esteem the nations who are free, be-
 “ cause liberty, above all things, is worthy
 “ of esteem and love : pity those on whom
 “ the sun of liberty has not yet shone, be-
 “ cause, in fact, they are very much to be
 “ pitied. A Fitz-James (a name known to
 “ you, and which your intollerance made
 “ known in France) a Fitz-James in the epif-
 “ copal pulpit of Soissons said—*love all men*
 “ *without distinction of nations ; for the Turks*
 “ *are your brethren* *.—O what an affecting

* LET the Bishop of St. David's blush in secret, upon comparing this expression, with part of his sermon before the House of Lords in Westminster Abbey, on the 30th of July 1784, the day of thanksgiving for the peace ; and may the Count excuse the English editor for suppressing (in compassion to his countryman) his very severe note upon his lordship.

“ expression ! and in the mouth of a priest !
“ how charming ! how great ! it contains
“ the sum of morality, of policy, and of
“ all the virtues. Carried into practice, it
“ would banish almost all the evils that
“ afflict the human race.”

TO LOVE ALL MEN WITHOUT DISTINCTION
OF NATIONS.

“ This is, and ever will be my motto.
“ Noble Englishmen vouchsafe to excuse
“ me for taking it.”



DOUBTS

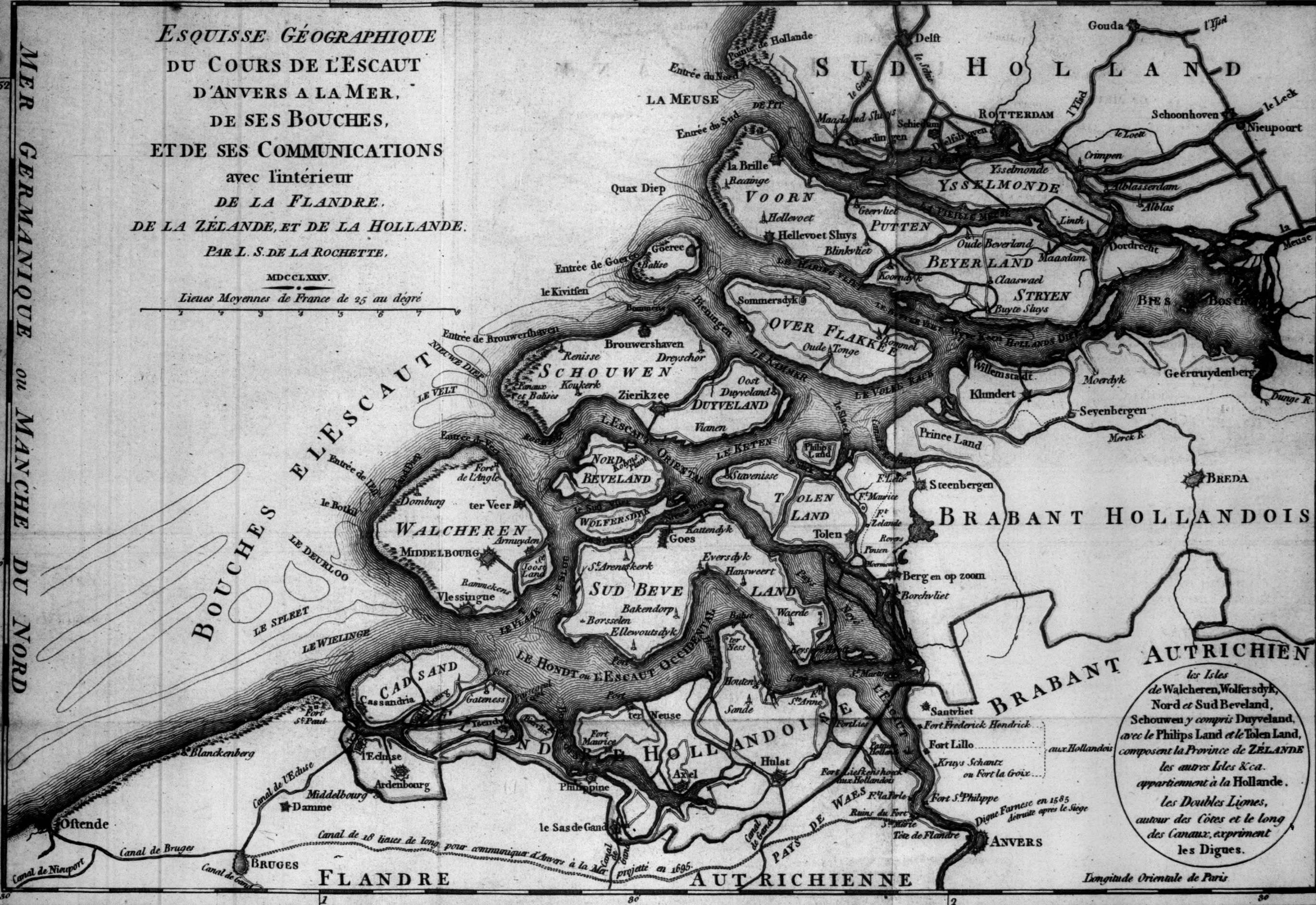
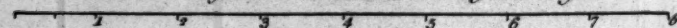
MER GERMANIQUE ou MANCHE DU NORD

ESQUISSE GÉOGRAPHIQUE
DU COURS DE L'ESCAUT
D'ANVERS A LA MER,
DE SES BOUCHES,
ET DE SES COMMUNICATIONS
avec l'intérieur
DE LA FLANDRE,
DE LA ZÉLANDE, ET DE LA HOLLANDE.

PAR L. S. DE LA ROCLETTE.

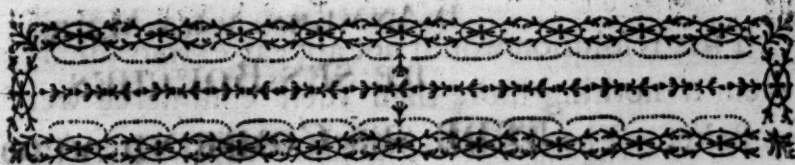
MDCCLXXV.

Lieues Moyennes de France de 25 au degré



les Isles
de Walcheren, Wolfersdyk,
Nord et Sud Beveland,
Schouwen y compris Duyveland,
avec le Philips Land et le Tolen Land,
composent la Province de ZÉLANDE
les autres Isles &c.
appartiennent à la Hollande.
Les Doubles Lignes,
autour des Côtes et le long
des Canaux, expriment
les Digues.

Longitude Orientale de Paris

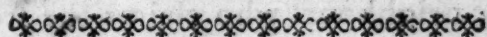


D O U B T S

CONCERNING THE
FREEDOM OF NAVIGATING the SCHELD,

CLAIMED BY THE EMPEROR;

*And respecting the Causes, and probable Consequences
of that Claim.*



LETTER I.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

THE Emperor is determined to restore to his Flemish subjects, the free navigation of the river Scheld, which traverses his domains in Brabant. And the United States clearly perceive that not only their prosperity or ruin, but even their existence as an independent nation, is involved in this important contest; therefore, they seem resolved to resist the attempts of the Emperor.

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THIS resolution would not appear extraordinary, even if nothing more than their commerce were at stake. The Dutch possess wealth to purchase troops, and how many Princes of Europe are ready to sell them! Besides, will it not be time enough for these republicans to yield, when they find their resistance is ineffectual?—Should they reason in this manner, it will be only a rough calculation, usual among tradesmen, and what modern nation is there, that does not wish to become *commercial*.

BUT if the destruction of the Dutch be the object in view, or if, in their opinion, they shall no longer exist as a state, but at the mercy of their formidable neighbour, who claims the freedom of the Scheld, their resistance becomes more interesting; it may be properly styled valour. Will France assist them? They flatter themselves she will; it is the general opinion, it is probable. But is it just, proper, and necessary? These are the points which I propose to discuss in the following Letters.

IT is said in France, doubtless, upon slight grounds, that the Emperor is a prince of no decided character; that he is ambitious to make himself talked of, setting forth extravagant claims, feigning

feigning to display great resources, whilst he is as easily to be intimidated as a school-boy who has just escaped from the ferula. At least such was the news from Paris prior to the affair of *Lillo*. And even since his Imperial Majesty has been seriously employed in realizing his threats, it has been positively asserted, that he will recede from his pretensions; that it is all smoke without fire; and that the cabinet of Versailles will station 20,000 armed spectators, to observe the motions of a Prince whose forces exceed 300,000 effective men.

THE inhabitants of Paris, and even of London, converse upon this subject, as they would upon a comet. Many politicians, who decide the fate of empires in their clubs, assure us, with astonishing confidence, that things cannot be better conducted otherwise. Other speculators maintain with no less confidence, that the rapaciousness of the Dutch is the sole cause of this war, and that it is necessary to humble and squeeze these *Mynheers*, who are crammed with ducats.

IF it be not quite unnecessary to reflect before we decide, perhaps some attention will be due to the doubts, which we shall propose to the friends

of humanity and justice, with a diffidence of our opinions, equal to our love of truth.

ASSUREDLY, it cannot but touch our feelings, to reflect, that we are on the point of seeing all Europe in flames, because the merchants of Antwerp are prevented from expediting their own ships, laden in their own port, and from receiving them there, when they arrive from other parts of the world. Thousands of men are going to be ruined, butchered, and thrown into a state of desolation, at the distance of some hundreds of leagues from Holland, without the least prospect that this contest can be in any event advantageous to themselves. The Dutch, whose riches and vices, contracted by a thirst for, and abundance of gold, have diminished the esteem they had merited by their wisdom and industry, are about to obtain from foreign Princes, what millions of men oppressed by their government could not obtain to soften the rigour of their fate. And who will be their principal agent? The French ministry, the same, who, to qualify the support they gave to the American insurgents, boasted in all quarters of the globe, that they had fought for the liberty of the seas. The King of Prussia will take an active part. The object of his brother's journey to Paris has been, it is said, to make the necessary

necessary arrangements for the conduct of the war, in which he will have a principal command. He has been highly applauded at the public spectacles, and courted and caressed in all companies, because it will probably be under his orders, that the throats will be cut, of a great part of those heroes of *six-pence* a day, who know nothing about the Scheld, nor commerce, nor the value of Holland; and who, together with their fathers, mothers, wives, brothers and sisters, would be very much puzzled (notwithstanding they essentially form that body politic whose interests we pretend to balance) to tell, in what respect it would be unfortunate for them, if the Emperor should become more powerful than their master; for what have they to lose, except their misery?—Here again we cannot avoid sighing at these melancholy reflections, which awaken so many others, but which, being common to modern wars, ought not to have any particular influence on the question before us. We are not yet arrived at those days, when philosophic ideas and measures may govern kingdoms. Our communities, mortified by a crafty and greedy policy, cannot readily abandon their established maxims. We are governed by events, and under certain circumstances we ought to be governed by them.

IN fact, the object and the duty of all governments is duration. Doubtless their true interests, at least what they conceive to be such, seldom agree with those of the people they govern. But this is not the case, when the object is to prevent invasions, and revolutions meditated by turbulent neighbours, who are agitated either by their own fiery tempers, or by the intrigues that are framed by ambitious subalterns who surround them. Such princes seek to aggrandize themselves: they would trample upon the necks of men, and not render them happy. If they aimed at promoting their welfare, if their ambition tended only to meliorate the lot of mortals; their own dominions would furnish them a theatre sufficiently ample, without coveting those of others. It is then but seldom the interest of the people to change masters, at least to receive new ones from the hands of victory. If there are any useful revolutions, they are such as proceed from internal convulsions of states, which form men, which place them in their proper stations, which furnish great examples, which instruct nations, and even their chiefs, which seldom, but sometimes, crush despotism, or at least render it circumspect. These are useful revolutions, and not conquests and partition treaties, which deliver over entire colonies of people, like vile herds to merciless

ciless butchers. A commotion among a free people, whose rights are in danger, cheers the heart of an honest man, more than all that feeble subordination, or those deplorable victories which are so much boasted of in other countries.

THE confederacies of absolute sovereigns, invested with great military power, are then to be dreaded, not only by princes; (they interest an honest man solely, as the fatal causes of the evils which afflict human nature, or as the instruments of good, which may indemnify nations for the long ravages of despotism) great confederacies, I say, are to be dreaded, not only by princes, but by the people, who are counted as nothing in these frightful broils, in these horrid contests; and are brought to such an abject state, that after being reduced to the mere instinct of the brute creation, they very soon neither hold in estimation nor in practice any other talent but domestic slavery. It is then very far from true, that confederacies are of no consequence but to sovereigns.

If that of the North threaten the continent, as I hope to demonstrate, we must watch its progress; and most assuredly, fate seems to offer a favourable moment to the French to restrict and keep it within due bounds for ever, by giving a constitu-

tion to the Germanic corps, which, if they do not make great haste, will soon be dissolved; it foresees, it knows the danger that threatens it, and it holds out its arms to France; why will she reject its solicitations?

WHY, because England watches her narrowly, and wishes to take revenge. Until the last war it was held for certain in France, that they should have crushed England, if they had not had enemies to encounter on the continent. Experience has shewn that they deceived themselves. In spite of the enormous errors of the English, they have not crushed them, though they have done them great injury; yet the Emperor left France to pursue her free career. At present, notwithstanding the exhausted state of these fierce rivals, France would expose herself by a war, to great disasters from that quarter, after having ineffectually exerted the most ruinous efforts against the Emperor.

VAIN terrors! England cannot do any thing, she will not do any thing; already she is no longer the first power in Europe. When she has lost her possessions in India, an event which can scarcely be retarded beyond two *lustra*; she will be a power of the third order, at least for many years; (alas! what

what would it signify, if she did but know her own happiness? power abroad, or liberty at home, she must choose the one or the other, for they are incompatible.) Then, and not till then, after many convulsions, England bathed in her own blood, but cured of her *delirium*, will be happy, and convinced that external influence does not in the least contribute to the happiness of a nation. With respect to the present moment, I scarcely think that she will interfere in these disputes, she will rather choose to wait for a more favourable crisis: but, of one thing I am certain, that she is ruined if she attempt to take revenge too soon. Happily she has not the means!

BUT why should France break off her friendship, which has lasted twenty-eight years, with the Emperor, of whom, to the present moment, she has had no reason to complain? Why should not the prosperity of Austrian Flanders, be as convenient to France, as that of Holland. Is not the prosperity of our nearest neighbour, of more advantage to us, by the overflow which always takes place, than that of the most distant? And will not the Austrian Netherlands, by enriching themselves, always be for France, who can invade them every instant, a more important guarantee against any attempts of the Emperor upon
France

France itself. Is not this exactly similar to a security, which is the better, the greater it is in value? Can any one seriously oppose to such important considerations, political treaties an hundred times violated, and such is the treaty of *Munster*. (1) It is, at least with respect to the Scheld, one of those, the unreasonableness of which ought to have paved the way to its abolition. The Dutch, when they exclaim against ingratitude, and breach of faith, forget that they themselves have evaded the most sacred engagements, entered into upon occasions of alliances that were useful to them. They conceal from each other, that in political transactions there is no such thing as a benefactor; that a power which has paid itself for its succours by extraordinary concessions, was only a cunning enemy; that it is an unexampled happiness for them, to have been able to enjoy for such a length of time, such a privilege, odious in every point of view, and intolerable to the Sovereign from whose predecessor it was gained; and they allow that an unprecedented happiness cannot be eternal. Why then protect, cherish, and partake of the error of the Dutch. What can France gain by this war? what has she to fear from remaining neutral? what

(1) A. D. 1648. Article XIV.

have these cruelly trifling politicians to offer her, in exchange for her declaring herself the enemy of the Emperor; they, who resemble those Lords of former times, who pillaged, sacked, and desolated their neighbours possessions, because they had eaten thistles in their fields? In fine, even according to the ordinary, and Machiavelian policy, would it not be wise, to be a quiet spectator, whilst these heroes of Epic poems are emptying their coffers; Do you think, Sir, that I have weakened the Emperor's cause?

I do not pretend to inquire at present, whether the defensive treaty of friendship and alliance, between France and the late Empress of Germany, has really been, or can actually ever be advantageous to France, with respect to her safety at home or abroad, her aggrandisement, her political influence, or her commerce. These very delicate and complicated questions do not enter into my plan; and it always was my private opinion, that France ought to be in friendship with the whole world. But neither benevolence, nor even friendship, are intitled to a blind complaisance, much less to a sacrifice of equity.

WHY does the Emperor insist on the navigation of the Scheld? Because he expects from it, the prosperity

prosperity of his finest provinces. But is it then so very clear, that the happiness, and riches of the Austrian Netherlands, depend upon the freedom of the Scheld? or rather, may it not be absolutely denied, so long as these provinces, which may be considered as some of the finest in Europe, have tracts over-run with underwood to clear, poor lands to enrich (2), marshes to drain, and canals to open, for the purpose of internal communication (3) or so long as they do not contain a third part of the inhabitants, who might find subsistence in them, without the aid of foreign commerce? besides, will the prosperity of the low countries recompence France for the loss of the United Provinces, which the Dutch consider as inevitable, the moment the navigation of the Scheld is opened to strangers?

(2) Look at the Provinces of Luxemburgh, Limbourg, Namur, Campine, Walloon, Brabant, &c. &c.

(3) Such as a canal from Brussels to the Sombre, for all the produce of the Walloon provinces: a canal from Mons to Ath, long since planned by the states of Hainault: a canal of communication between the Haine and the Sombre, &c. &c. By means of such canals the whole tour of the low countries may be made by water, and the navigation of the Scheld has no connection with all these undertakings. A canal from Bruges to the sea, which subject will very soon be agitated, would terminate the dispute which threatens Europe with a general war.

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if this assertion be well founded, the treaty of Munster seems to me to be justified, and, far from thinking it unreasonable, I consider it as one of the most important laws in the political code of Europe. But before we discuss this question, which we have only slightly touched, let us presume to ask those who advise France to abandon Holland, if they have well weighed the horrid stain, of perfidy, that will be fixed upon the cabinet of Versailles, which (whether right or wrong in its connections with Holland) in fact, plunged that country into an abyss, by determining it to break with England. Have they well weighed the effect which the reputation of good faith ought to produce in the political balance of Europe; particularly when that reputation, whether merited or not, is the only palliative for the most enormous faults, and has already been considerably diminished by the conduct of the Court of Versailles, at the commencement of the last war. Have they thoroughly reflected upon that coalition of the *Cæsar of Vienna* and the *Zenobia of Petersburgh*, to use the expression of Mr. Linguet (4) of that coalition so authoritative, or to speak plainly, so insolent, that
one

(4) It is generally known, that *Zenobia* was Queen of Palmyra; "She was," as M. Euvoide Hauteville, who wrote her history, tells

one cannot be of a different opinion from Joseph II. without receiving billets for quartering one hundred thousand Russians? Have they well considered that the house of Brandenburg, the only counterpoise against this terrible mass of bayonets, is in a truly critical situation! that the successor to the King, is *but* a Prince, or that he will

tells us from Pollio, entirely exempt from the shameful weaknesses which tarnish the memory of Cleopatra: "Study and the chase had by turns been the delight of her youth, an education conformable to her genius." The Princess of Palmyra is undoubtedly indebted to him, for this boasted purity of manners. Let us now see what Bossuet says of her, in speaking of Odenatus King of Palmyra "His wife Zenobia marched with him at the head of those armies, of which she had the sole command after his death; and rendered herself famous throughout the globe, for uniting chastity to beauty, and wisdom to valour." Odenatus having been assassinated by one of his relations named Meonius, the popular report, which Pollio indiscreetly relates, accused Zenobia of being the accomplice of Meonius. It was laid to her charge that she wanted to reign alone, but all the ancient authorities reject this injurious suspicion, and Zenobia is handed down spotless to posterity. "Adored," says M. de Hauteville (page 128.) "by her august husband, his inseparable companion in his encampments, on his marches, in the chase, and in battle; in winter quarters as well as in sieges; what shall I say farther, as much superior by the gifts of nature to the trifling beauties of the East; as she surpassed them in genius, and magnanimity; what could she have to fear from a temperate man, from the wife Emperor Odenatus?"

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be, as he is announced to Europe, a man of great talents ; that in the first case he will be ruined ; and that in the second, it may well be doubted, whether he may not prefer the easier advantage of dividing its spoil, to the dangerous honour of being the champion of the political liberty of Europe.

I AM aware of the reply. I know that Russia herself will sooner or later be parcelled out, at least if she assume any new seat of empire, or if she succeeds in her schemes to conquer Turkey in Europe. I know that this early fruit (5) of a hot-house covered with snow will most probably never arrive at maturity ; I know, that the Emperor passes for a man full of ardour, but without constancy ; agitated by turbulent ideas, without system, and without order ; and whose activity often resembles

(5) THE prophecy of that great man, who had seen so much, and who perceived much more than he had ever seen, is verifying every day. " The Russians will never be effectually polished, because they began too soon. Peter I. had an imitative, but not a true original genius, that which creates and makes every thing out of nothing ; some things he did very well, the greatest part were ill timed. He saw that his subjects were barbarians, but he did not see that they were not ripe for civilization. He resolved to civilize them, when he should only have trained them to it. He determined instantly to make them Germans, and Englishmen, when he should have

resembles a delirium. It is said, that his gleanings are no savings; that his dominions are a camp and not an empire; *that he is perfectly acquainted with the course of exchanges*, and has no finances; that he is master of military discipline, but knows nothing of war. It is said, that in order to render himself in fact very formidable, at least if any wisdom remain in Europe, he announces pretensions too disproportionate to his means; too alarming to the Continent, which is menaced only by his titles. It is remarked, that he proceeds too rapidly to go any great lengths; unless the mistakes of other powers are his prime ministers. Like a child, who sees the moon at the bottom of a well, and cries out,—*I will have the moon—I will have the moon.*—The Emperor says—*I will have commerce—I will have commerce,*—without knowing how, or from whence, or what will be the vital

“ have began by making them good Russians; he prevented his
 “ subjects from ever becoming what they might have been, by
 “ persuading them that they were then, what they are not even
 “ now. It is thus, that a French preceptor teaches his pupil
 “ to shire for a moment in his infancy, and to be good for
 “ nothing all the rest of his life. The Empire of Russia
 “ will aim at the conquest of Europe, and will be herself sub-
 “ dued. Her Tartar subjects, or her neighbours, will become
 “ her and our masters: this revolution appears to me inevi-
 “ table. All the Sovereigns of Europe are labouring in con-
 “ cert to accelerate it.” *Social Contract*, Chap. VIII.

source

source nor the external support of it ; nor yet for whom or for what distant, or, accurately, for what immediate object he labours ; nor how many conquests it will cost him over himself before he can think of foreign commerce, nor how much more preferable is internal trade, which is almost the only branch within his grasp.

THE Emperor knows only how to COMMAND, and that is not the best way of guiding men. Observe his conduct with respect to Poland, to Venice, to Germany, where the mane of the aged, though not exhausted lion has silenced him ;—to Hungary, to the barrier towns, to the clergy, to the living, to the dead.—He will have commerce, yet he is the enemy of civil liberty. There cannot be found in the annals of the Roman Emperors, nor even in the code of the Inquisition, a more tyrannical law than his edict against the liberty of the press, in those very Netherlands to which he wants to restore the freedom of the Scheld.

THE English have called this edict the *paroxysm* of a despot enraged by contradiction. The Emperor will have commerce ! yet he prohibits his subjects, under the severest penalties, from leaving a soil dishonoured by their misery and slavery, which are sufficiently attested to all Europe, by

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the very law which punishes them for seeking out happier countries. (6) And at the same time he *commands* quick lime to be used to destroy the remains of all that was dear to us.—The antients did not think like him; they, knowing that man is a wandering being by nature, used their utmost endeavours to attach him to his native country; and above all, by a veneration for the ashes of his ancestors, which they made the object of domestic worship. In a word, (I continue to repeat the words of all Europe) the Emperor is rich in phrases, and does a great deal of harm; he writes maxims, and commits horrid outrages. (7) It is

(6) SEE the Imperial Law against Emigrations.

(7) THE panegyrist of the Emperor would be terrified if we were to collect together the ordinances their hero has presumed to issue. Few days pass without bringing forth some sanguinary law. In the very instant that I am correcting the proof of this sheet, I find in the public papers an imperial rescript which sets a price upon the heads of *suborned seducers*, who are not described but by these vague terms; and it is therein declared, “that if any community is so perverse as to admit into their society persons of this description, or to suffer themselves to be drawn aside by their artifices, the Judge of the village, and two of the sworn inhabitants, shall in conformity to the national laws be *EMPALED*, without the least hopes of obtaining a pardon.—The code of Joseph II. will very soon be as famous as that of Draco.

not

not likely that such a man should endanger the liberty of our continent, unless a universal lethargy bordering upon stupefaction should prevail.

BUT still, difficult as it seems, it is not impossible; for *there are*, says Cardinal de Retz, *madnesses which are not human*. In our days 150,000 Frenchmen, 100,000 Russians, 20,000 Swedes, 30,000 Imperial troops, 160,000 Austrians were not able to subdue, nor even to humble a power till then reckoned scarcely of the third order. France, that necessary rendezvous of European policy; France, whose present ministry are prudent, and even able, but unsteady and transitory; France, I say, may derange all the combinations of human wisdom, by her internal revolutions, by the insignificance of her rulers, by the inconsistency of their systems; by the variations of intrigue, that eternal first mover of a court, where every thing is arranged methodically to habituate the prince, and to circumscribe the ministers within the circle of the ephemeral interests of patronage and of dependency, which makes one despot, in the midst of his divan, the greatest of all slaves. France, that noble kingdom, where the government has so long struggled against nature, France, without exhausting herself of men, and of millions in specie, to support a pretended balance of

power, might, without doubt, in the course of ten years, solely by means of a good administration, recover its natural superiority over all Europe, a superiority which it ought never to exercise, but to command respect to every species of freedom. But is France in this august situation? Can she rely upon ten years of prosperous government? In the course of fifteen centuries has she twice enjoyed that happiness? Who can promise that she will regenerate? Have human affairs been ever observed to take a retrograde course? And what have we to offer to her in the room of that routine which fosters and prolongs her decline? If her internal diseases be such, that she is too far gone for the dominion even of force, if her government has abused its authority so much, that it no longer has any power; if it has every thing to fear from her warlike enemies; if it be impossible for it to say what it will do during ten years, which scarce make a political day; if it be as weak and *divided*, as it is arbitrary and despotic, the eternal instrument of corruption, or sport of inconstancy; if it has neither union, nor concord, can it in prudence let the clouds gather which contain the impending storm? Ought one to advise it to pursue a plan of neutrality, which requires great consistency, great harmony, indefatigable vigilance, and the ability to strike bold strokes with safety?

Will

Will it not be much better to take no thought for the morrow, but to wait patiently for some more favourable crisis? Must we say to it, *wait quietly for the storm*, as long as we see no conductor erected to avert the lightening.

THIS conductor ought to be, and might be, a solid, sincere, eternal alliance with England; an alliance founded upon a treaty of commerce, which should banish for ever, all national jealousies, and indissolubly reconcile the interests of the two kingdoms. Thus combined, they would easily impose silence on all the rest of the world. But then Holland would be protected, and so she will be at present; for, to calculate only as a political arithmetician, without bringing into the account, the desolation of the most surprising country in the universe, and of that people, whose manners, industry, and perseverance, do perhaps still more honour to the human race; will it not, after all, be better to prevent the invasion of Holland, than to tear her, after her conquest, at an immense expence, out of the hands of her ravagers.

THE English, even in their political system, can have no interest in the destruction of the Dutch. There is a competition in commerce between them, but not of power, and Holland can

never do much injury to England in the East-Indies, or even in Europe, but by means of an offensive alliance with France. Unfortunately England is not yet brought to this reasonable way of thinking; and much I fear that her violent and vindictive spirit will not be forced into it, but by new calamities.

LET us felicitate ourselves then, that the French ministry are once more the protectors of liberty, and let us beware of diverting them from it. And if in a moment of ill-humour, for which the Dutch, like every other nation, too often furnish occasion, we should be ever tempted to do it; let us ask ourselves this question, whether heaven-born liberty already enjoys too many asylums on our globe; and whether we can, without a crime, offer up our prayers that she may be banished from one of the three cantons of Europe, where she still in some degree exists?

I HEAR your reply, desist, say you, from these general reflections, which prove nothing, for this reason, that they prove too much; and since you cannot deny without overturning the first principles of natural right, that the freedom of the Scheld is evidently just, how will you presume to advise France to oppose it; you who have so often
curled

curled that Machiavelian system which despises equity?

If the liberty of the Scheld appeared to me to be evidently just, I would assert, and I would prove, that it is one of those things that ought to be expunged from the system of morality, for fear of drawing on the most detestable consequences. If the liberty of the Scheld were evidently just, it would still be necessary not to attack sword in hand, the most positive treaties, instead of explaining them by negotiations, (8) which might indemnify the Dutch, which might if possible guarantee them, or at least dissipate their inquietude. In the time of Charles II. King of Spain, at the close of the last century, it was resolved to dig a canal from *Bruges* through the *Waes* country to Fort St. Mary upon the Scheld, in order to give the city of Antwerp a direct communication with the sea. (9) Without a doubt it would cost must less
to

(8) It is worthy of remark, that the two ships expedited by the Court of Brussels, the one to sail down and the other up the *Hondt*, made this attempt in the midst of the negotiation, and when the Dutch, through moderation, had withdrawn the *Patoche*, or guard-ship, which they had stationed, and had a right to station before fort Lillo.

(9) By letters patent of the 7th of June 1698, the same King of Spain granted a power to establish a company to trade

to make a canal, than to make war, and that an unjust one, for it is not true, that the freedom of the Scheld can be justly demanded.

IN fact, the war which rendered the seven United Provinces independent, began in Flanders and Brabant. These countries had no other port but that of *Sluys*. The Prince of Orange, who knew the importance of the provinces of Holland and Zealand, and how capable they were of being put into a state of defence, by their natural situation, by their vicinity to the sea, and by the facility of communicating with Great Britain, made them the centre of his forces and of his resistance, towards the end of the reign of Philip II. From that moment, the Scheld was shut up from the rest of the provinces every time that the city of Antwerp was invested by the armies of Spain. Upon its returning again to its allegiance to that crown in 1585, it ceased to have a direct communication with the sea; (1) and what is very remarkable, but which

to the East-Indies, and to the coast of Guinea, but his death prevented its being carried into execution.

(1) I CITE for this fact an unquestionable authority, viz. *The Historical and Political Memoirs of the Austrian Netherlands*, a work composed by order of the Emperor, and printed at Brussels in 1784.

the

the Emperor's writers will not mention, it was the masters of Antwerp themselves who favoured the restraint upon the navigation of the Scheld. *That opulent city*, says De Wit, appearing too formidable to Spanish despotism (2).

THE interdiction of the Scheld then, had its origin in causes totally foreign to the interests of

(2) *When the Duke of Parma took the city of Antwerp, it was intirely separated from the sea, and the King of Spain imprudently neglected to open the Scheld, wishing to reduce this city which was too powerful for him, and to disperse commerce among several other cities, at the same time employing all his forces upon the frontiers of Gueldres, and against France and England; which obliged most of the merchants of Antwerp to remove to Amsterdam, which even before the troubles, was become the first mercantile city of the low countries. The King of Spain deprived them of all religious liberty, and by his continual wars he entirely neglected the defence of the seas; this gave the last blow to the commerce, to the fisheries, and to the navigation which had been kept up in Flanders. The fishery fell entirely to the lot of Holland; but a third part of the manufactures was established in England, such as serges, damasks, and stockings, at that time unknown there, at least there were no bodies of such manufacturers; another part settled at Leyden. As to the linen manufacture, it was established at Haerlem, but a part of the linen manufactures remained in Flanders and Brabant, and afterwards these manufactures were introduced by land into France and Germany, without a possibility of our preventing it. Memoirs of John De Wit, grand pensionary of Holland, ch. viii. first part, pages 38, 39. Ratibon edit. Erasme. Kinkius 1709.*

Holland.

Holland. The sovereignty of this river has been since guaranteed to her by all the treaties which secure the political existence of Europe. It was upon this condition, that the Dutch renounced all claims to the Austrian Netherlands. They have possessed it one hundred and thirty-five years; France and England have jointly guaranteed to them the exclusive advantages of this navigation.

If in order to overturn positive treaties, it be determined at present to recur to natural right, why do not all the powers of Europe reciprocally resume their provinces conquered, ceded, or inherited. *The social order, says Rousseau, is a sacred right, which serves as the basis of all others. This right however, does not proceed from nature; but is founded upon conventions.* Conventions then are the basis of all rights. Must all these from henceforth be violated; must we destroy all political establishments, undetermine all authorities, and carry desolation into every state, under the pretence of bringing it back to the principles of the law of nature, from which every nation has deviated, or rather which have been universally infringed. As the tranquility of nations is also an essential object; as the general happiness of mankind depends less upon melioration than upon the quiet enjoyment of what one possesses; as the republic of Henry

IV.

IV. or the European diet of the Abbé de St. Pierre, are not yet established, I shall maintain, without scruple, against any pretended natural right, that the Emperor's claim is unjust; and that the other powers of Europe ought to put a stop to his enterprises. And if these powers cannot be satisfied without annihilating Holland, or, which amounts to the same, without delivering her up to the mercy of an ambitious Prince, who exhibits to Europe the most numerous and the most formidable legions that ever threatened its political liberty; I ask the blindest partisans of the Emperor, what barbarian will propose to sacrifice a whole nation to the prosperity of the traders of Antwerp? Now this is precisely the state of the question—when it is asked, whether the Emperor ought to adhere to the treaty of Munster, or forcibly to navigate the Scheld,

It is not, as has been so often alledged, mere commercial jealousies, or the rivalry of merchants, that is in dispute between the Emperor and the Dutch. The real safety, the physical existence, as well as the liberty and independence of the United Provinces is at stake.

IN fact, the Scheld ought not to be considered in the light of the other rivers of Europe, which
flow

flow confined between two banks, and which near their mouths have only shoals of sand, or little desert islands. The Scheld divides itself below Antwerp into two branches; the principal, which the Emperor seems to claim, is called the *Hondt*, or the *Western Scheld*, the mouth of which is at *Flushing*, and receives ships of war. The other, named the *Eastern Scheld*, admits vessels of considerable burden, and falls into the sea higher up, that is to say, on the north side of the island of *Walcheren*. From these two branches issue several navigable inlets, some of them very considerable, which give access to all the populous and flourishing isles of *Zealand*, to the *Meuse*, and to all the interior parts of the United Provinces.(3) Thus, not only an ambitious Prince, master of the Scheld, may in an instant subdue or ravage *Flushing*, *Middleburgh*, and even *Rotterdam*; a great number of inferior ports, and the mouths of all the canals which traverse the Protestant low countries; but a fit of rage of a wicked, or even a passionate despot, may bury all the country, and particularly *Zealand* and *Dutch Flanders*, under water.

(3) THE treaty of Munster too, between Philip IV. and the States General (January 30, 1648,) stipulates, *that the Scheld, the canals of Sas, the Zwyn, and other mouths of the sea, bordering upon them, shall be kept closed, on the side belonging to the States.* Art. XVI.

THIS then is undoubtedly the reason why the Dutch, who are not obliged to reply to the privy counsellors of despotism, by unfolding the horrors of their situation, are struck with terror ; but with a magnanimous terror, so that it excites the concern and esteem of all the world in their favour. This is the reason why they arm all their peasants, who will suffer themselves to be massacred on the banks of the Scheld, and on their dykes, rather than yield to the Emperor a passage into their country—at least the friends of liberty, lamenting the fate of Geneva, indulge the pleasure of thinking so. The Dutch perceive that the grand question is, whether they shall remain free, or no longer exist but at the nod of the Sultan of Austria? And let it not be said, that the idea of breaking down the dykes of Holland, could have proceeded only from a Caligula ; during the late war between the English and the Dutch, the English papers for whole months together resounded with this horrible project.

I CANNOT see, Sir, what reply the pretended interpreters of the law of nature will make to these considerations ; for there are but two species of public right in the whole world ; that of force, and that of convention ; that of force dictates only to cowards, and from it may spring necessary
sub-

submission, but never obedience; that of convention all men are interested to respect, since no civil society whatever exists but under the protection of conventions. Without doubt, what is understood by the law of nature, considered even in its most abstract relations, ordains an attention to one's own preservation; it admits therefore the empire of force.—Well then, let force once more open the scene to the bloody sports that desolate humanity; (fortunately it will not be the first time that an handful of freemen have repulsed torrents of armed slaves vomited forth by despotism); but let not force insult us by usurping the language of justice.





LETTER II.

Particular Reflections.

A READER, less informed than yourself, Sir, may perhaps complain that I have taken too hastily for granted, that there existed in the north of Europe a threatening confederacy, the motions of which cannot be too closely watched. This important fact doubtless requires proofs, or at least a chain of probabilities strong enough to form, if I may use the expression, a political demonstration.

AND although I have viewed the cause of the Dutch apart, without considering it as it bears relation to the interests of the other powers of Europe, I know that interest is the first mover of men and of governments too well to look for it in justice, which however, after all, will constantly be its surest basis.

It is essential then for me to add to the general remarks I have presented to you in the preceding letter, some more minute observations which appear to me necessary, in order to obtain a thorough knowledge of the present state of politics. And if I presume not too much upon my own sentiments and abilities, they will prove in a satisfactory manner—that the claim of the freedom of the Scheld, is the annunciation of a connected plan, long since formed, which menaces the liberties of Europe.

I SHALL be obliged, Sir, to take up the subject a little farther back in the page of history; but do not be apprehensive that I shall lose myself in digressions; every one of the facts that you are going to peruse, even those which you may imagine the most foreign to my subject, are closely connected with it. Besides, I intreat you to recollect, that in this letter, the question will be treated only as it relates to the politics of the present times, without pretending to discuss how far the established systems are right or wrong. The contest relates to the law of nations, not of nature; it relates to the present state of human affairs, and not to an *Utopia*: to the probable consequences that may result from the Emperor's pretensions, and not to philosophical discussions equally foreign to
all

all governments. Remember too, that this letter, like the preceding, and those that are to follow, only offers doubts, not decisions. I assert nothing positively but my sincerity, and the fidelity of my researches.

PETER I. who said, that the condition of an English Admiral was much above that of a Czar (4), was agitated during his whole life by mad projects of establishing a marine force. This madness has been the misfortune of his country, for his successors, steadfast to this chimerical and even absurd plan, have undertaken I know not how many wars, to augment their navigation and commerce, or rather to procure both. It was the ambition of Peter to have a port upon the Baltic; he negotiated for another port with the court of Sweden, and received a flat denial, which was the root of that famous war, that had well

(4) *Voyage de Compt Algarotti en Russie*, Berlin edit. 1772. vol. v. p. 62. The greater credit is to be given to Count Algarotti, whom I shall often quote in this letter; when he advances facts unfavourable to the systems of the Russian government, because he was always an enthusiastic admirer of Peter I. and of his growing empire.

nigh proved fatal to the empire of the Czar, but which took a turn singularly favourable to his enterprises. All his attempts, and those of his successors, upon the Caspian sea are well known (5); which they at length renounced, after a prodigious waste of men and money. The founder of Petersburg, who had likewise extended his views as far as the Black Sea, went no farther than the sea of *Azoph*, it was reserved for Catherine II. to finish this great work. After having caused herself to be declared Empress, and *Autocratrix* of the Tartars, or *Kouban* and *Crim* Tartars, of those very Tartars, whose ancestors formerly swelled the hords of the *Huns* and *Alans*, who subdued all the nations of the North, extended themselves from the *Danube* to the *Rhine*, and made the

(5) THE trade of Russia, in Persia since the year 1740, has been in a successive state of languor, disgrace and ruin. See *Essai sur le Commerce de la Russie*, p. 103; in this work, printed in 1777, are to be found several accurate and valuable facts, but very often likewise, contradictory opinions and assertions. Catherine II. ordered the establishment of a Persian Company, and invited the merchants subjects of her empire, to fill up this company as soon as possible. But a short time after, this plan was given up, upon the representations of the chamber of commerce.

Roman empire their tributary ; of those Tartars, who formerly obliged the Russians themselves to pay them a tribute of birds of prey, and an hundred thousand crowns in specie, or the value in furs :—Catherine II. has ORDERED, that the Peninsula, which we call the Crimea, shall in future bear the more sonorous name of *Tauris*. She has ORDERED, that the city of *Caffa*, which the Genoese merchants formerly rendered so famous, should resume its ancient name of *Theodosia*. Nay, more, she has ORDERED, that a great trade shall be carried on at *Theodosia*, because, by the treaty of *Kainarjeck*, or *Kainardji*, ships may arrive there from the Mediterranean by the *Dardanelles* and the *Bosphorus* (6).

(6) ONE may judge, from what Algarotti says, (page 162) of the commerce that the Empress has obtained at such an immense expence, by seizing on the city of *Caffa*. “ This city, the richest and the most mercantile in the whole country, formerly the *Messina* of Greece, was well calculated to satisfy these two objects, (of having a port in the Black Sea, and a footing in the *Crimea*) besides the grain, butter and salt, which they sell there, a great quantity of CAVIER is there made, which is sent to all parts of Europe, and even to the Indies. Sturgeons fed and fattened in the low and almost fresh waters of the *Palus Meotides* furnish this article.”—Is not this an admirable commerce ?

UNFORTUNATELY, in order to carry on a great trade, it is necessary to have numerous and industrious inhabitants, and commodities to exchange, which other nations want; and these are hardly ever to be found, either in the *Kouban*, a very barren country, full of fens; nor in the Peninsula of the *Crimea*, a province which furnishes fine grain, but which is not larger than *Champaign*. Whether the *Autocratrix* of Russia can supply what nature has denied, or *command* her to bring forth a new kind of produce, is not for me to determine. It is not for me to determine, what method she will take to preserve her ships, when they are to brave the dangers of the Black Sea; but above all, the shoals which surround the *Crimea*, in which are more destructive worms than in any other seas. I know not whether the famous law of Augustus *de coercendo imperio*, is not become necessary more than ever for this colossal empire. Particularly, I have strong reasons to doubt the success of so many vast enterprises; but it is beyond a doubt, that Russia has paid for the *Kouban*, and the *Crimea*, twenty times their value. The war with the Turks, to enable her to seize these two countries, have cost that thinly peopled empire (7) more than

1,300,000

(7) THE last enumeration in 1764, according to the *Essai sur le Commerce de la Russie*, (p. 37, 38.) made the total number

1,300,000 men (8) killed, or dying by land or by sea, of fatigue, wretchedness, hunger, and above all, of the plague. The late *Admiral Knowles*, who was invited into Russia, to superintend the Russian navy, divulged these facts upon his return to England.

THE expenditure of money has been equally enormous(9). Independent of the charges of building,

ber of the inhabitants of both sexes amount to between seventeen and eighteen millions; but this computation cannot suit the present time; after the war in Poland and Turkey, the last revolt, and the plague at Moscow. The general result therefore is fourteen millions, at which we may fairly fix the population of the Russian empire. A very different calculation from that of the twenty millions so liberally given to Russia by Voltaire.

(8) THE valuable documents from which I have extracted this fact, which is rather extenuated than exaggerated, are too prolix to be given at length; but that I may be the more readily believed, it may be sufficient to read in Count Algarotti's *Voyage de Russie*, p. 125, "that the war with the Turks had cost Russia in 1739, for the five years it had lasted, more than 200,000 men," and to reflect, that I am writing at the end of December, 1784, after the plague of *Moscow*, &c. &c.

(9) IF any one wishes to form an adequate idea of it, he has only to consult *Algarotti*, who, by the bye, as we have al-

ing, the expences of naval stores and seamen, which are not to be computed, Russia was unable

ready remarked, sets every thing in the fairest light for Russia. "What wood (says he, p. 75) do you think they use at Petersburg for building ships? They use a kind of oak, which is at least two years in its passage thither. It is sent off from *Casan* in pieces worked up fit for immediate use; from thence it is some time coming up the *Volga* and the *Tuertza*; afterwards by means of a canal it passes into the *Sna* and the *Mesta*, and having entered the *Volcova*, it falls into a canal which joins the lake of *Ladoga*, from whence the *Neva* transports it to Petersburg." Several anecdotes may be added to these particulars. We find for instance, in the *Essai sur le Commerce de la Russie*, p. 117, that the Czarina sent 5000 sailors in 1773, to *Tagaurok*: that at the same period she transported 10,000 more, who were to become husbandmen in the same quarter.—Were they not, rather 10,000 peasant slaves, whom she COMMANDED to become sailors! We read in Algarotti, p. 66. that in 1739, "from ten to twelve thousand sailors formed in that school of discipline, the Baltic sea, had already perished in the sea of *Asoph*, where the present war obliged the government to transport them, to equip the little fleets fitted out against the Turks." In the same place, it is said, "That the Czar had assigned 300,000*l.* sterling for the maintenance of his marine, an immense sum for a country, where the government performs for two shillings, what the government in England cannot do for a guinea; for which reason we may very properly apply to the Czarina, what Horace formerly said of the King of Cappadocea." (See the text, *Mancipiiis*, &c. for Algarotti has not quoted this verse.)

to support the last war, without making prodigious remittances to foreign countries, and borrowing in Holland, at Genoa, and at Venice. Catherine II. has very lately had recourse to alterations in the currency. Paper money had been introduced into Russia in the reign of Elizabeth, to a very small amount. The present Empress has increased it by degrees, so that at this time, the computation amounts to *thirty-six millions* of roubles in actual circulation, or *one hundred and sixty-two millions* *tournois*, reckoning the roubles at only four livres ten sous (1). What a symptom of decay in so despotic a government!

Mancipiis locuples eget æris Cappadocum Rex.

THE Mediterranean fleet cost immense sums, and few of the ships that composed it ever returned to the Russian ports. However it burnt the Turkish fleet, and caused *Te Deum* to be sung at Petersburg. The squadron in the Black Sea was not less expensive; it was equipped with seamen recruited under the Polar circle; the cables for the ships were obliged to be transported from the northern extremities of the empire, so that

(1) *Essai sur le Commerce de la Russie*, p. 249, 250, 254.

by the time they arrived in the Euxine sea, they had cost as much as if they had been made of gold and silk. An individual, who should be guilty of such follies, would be called a lunatic; especially if, after such ruinous exertions, he had obtained only the *Crim* and the *Kouban*, an indemnification which must occasion fresh expences, but which fortunately for Russians, it is almost impossible for them to keep.

AND after all, of what use will these possessions be to them? So many usurpations and conquests have been undertaken, only to secure the commerce of the Black Sea. But this commerce, an eternal illusion to Russia, can never be of any value but to the sovereign, whom it renders master of the points of communication, or, if I may be allowed the expression, of the links which connect this sea with the Mediterranean, and the rest of maritime Europe. A slight sketch of the history of this commerce will be sufficient to convince you.

THIS Black Sea, so celebrated in the early ages of history, for the expedition of the Argonauts, was much better known by the ancients, at least on the eastern and southern coasts, than it is in our days. The Egyptians, long before the Greeks, had

had penetrated as far as the *Palus Meotis* (2). Ancient history considers them even as the founders of the Colchian nation; and *Lucian* (3) tells us, that the Phœnician navigators, following their example, made annual voyages thither. Jason, with his adventurers, came to *Colchos*, in search of the two most powerful objects of attraction to the desires of man—gold and fine women, of which the fleece of *Phryxus*, and the enchantress *Medea* are the emblems.

THE Greeks constantly pursued the commerce of the Euxine; they founded a multitude of colonies on its coasts; of which Strabo, Pliny, and Arrian have handed down to us the names, and occasionally the descriptions. It was principally at *Colchos*, and upon the southern coasts of the Black Sea, that the merchants were eager to traffic.

(2) The ancients carried on very little commerce there; for Pliny (lib. ii. cap. 67.) bears testimony, that in his time, they were ignorant whether the *Palus Meotis* was not a gulph of the ocean.

(3) *Lucian Toxar.*

THAT *Colchos*, now subject to the Turks (4), in the time of the Romans, was full of cities, to which commerce drew the inhabitants of all other nations. In vain should we now look for their vestiges, in the forests which cover these beautiful regions. Iron, steel, not to mention gold and silver, fruits, hides, corn, wax, honey, hemp, flax, and ship-timber, were the articles of that extensive commerce; to which might be added slaves; for that infamous traffic is of the greatest antiquity in Asia, and particularly in that, and the neighbouring countries, where the human race is the finest upon earth. The caravans which came from Persia, brought in exchange for the above articles, and for other European commodities which they found there, the rich merchandise of upper Asia and the Indies.

THEY arrived at the mouth of the *Phasis*, now in a great measure choaked up with sand. The Greek emperors for a long time kept up a fleet of forty sail, which served at the same time to carry on commerce, and to protect the Black Sea, by which the traffic of slaves was conducted, when the

(4) WE comprise it under the names of *Mingrelia*, *Imiretia*, and *Guriel*.

Circassian mamalukes governed Egypt. The name of this militia, which signifies *purchased slaves*, plainly informs us in what manner they were recruited. The sultans treated with the emperors to obtain permission to send a certain number of ships annually into the Euxine sea; and they returned loaded with slaves, bought up in Colchos, Circassia, and on the borders of the *Palus Meotis*. Among these mamalukes, by the way, we must look for the origin of the present trade in slaves of both sexes, peculiar to these countries, and among the Nomades of little Tartary, slaves who people the seraglios of Constantinople, and of Asia, who furnish bashaws to the Ottoman empire, give sovereigns to Egypt, and who from a hord of barbarians, ugly to a degree of deformity, have propagated the finest race of men in Europe.

THE commerce which was carried on upon the northern coast, and in the Tauric Chersonese, could not be compared with the ancient commerce of the Black Sea: its seat was at *Theodosia*, a colony of the Milesians, famous in more ancient times, but abandoned under the emperor Adrian; afterwards re-established; possessed for a long time by the Genoese, under the name of *Caffa*; taken in 1476, by the Turks, under Mahomet II.; declared

clared free by the treaty of Kainardjick, and finally usurped by Russia, in 1784. This commerce consisted, as it does at present, in corn, butter, tunny, and caviare; but that of the Genoese was not confined to such inconsiderable articles; it comprehended in some measure, that of the Black Sea, and its neighbouring regions, which the Greeks had abandoned, being harrassed by the invasions of the Barbarians, torn to pieces by intestine divisions, and stupified by superstition. Possessed of the city of *Tanais*, upon the *Cimmerian Bosphorus*, at present known by the name of *Asoph*; the Genoese, when the empire of Constantinople passed from the Greeks to the Latins, received there the merchandise of Asia, brought to them by the caravans of Astracan; and they sold them all along the coasts, which were not then so thinly peopled as at present, but both supplied and had demand for more articles of commerce. Besides, the Genoese were a republic of merchants, not subject to imperial regulations, which overload commerce, dry up its sources, and destroy it. They divided the navigation of the Mediterranean with the Venetians: They were the only people who transported merchandise from Europe to the *Euxine* Sea. Add to this, that the Genoese, as well as the Venetians, had obtained the liberty of trading to all parts of the Greek empire,

pire, without paying any duties. But the discoveries of the Portuguese, and their successes, having opened a new channel for the commerce of Asia, Italian industry was deceived in its speculations. As soon as the Black Sea had lost its communication with the two Peninsulas of India, its ports and coasts were deserted (5).

It must be supposed, that the example of the commerce formerly carried on in the Euxine, and the success of the Genoese, has seduced the Russians, and all those who extol future advantages of their establishments on the coasts of that sea. However, no circumstances were ever more widely different. For Russia, whose numerous projects and ordinances do not announce any very profound views, will be hardly able to do more than export the commodities of Taures, which will never form any considerable object, and besides this, instead of being favoured, she will be continually crossed by the Turks, whose interest it is to recover that province at any rate. The Genoese, who traded without competitors upon that sea, where the Russians will meet with powerful rivals, had no occasion for either fleets or armies to sup-

(5) See *Essai sur le Commerce de la Russie*, p. 106.

port them there, and the expence of protecting the pretended commerce of Russia, will always exceed the value of *Tauris*. Doubtless, if the Czarina should seize upon Constantinople, it would not be impossible for her to restore the settlements on the coasts of the Black Sea to their antient splendour: but till this happens, why do not the Turks do it themselves? And if their indolence do not permit them to undertake it, or if their government disdains every species of commerce, would it not be infinitely more expedient and more advantageous for the Ottoman empire to give it up to the southern nations of Europe (6) from whom it has nothing to fear.

It

(6) In the *Essai sur le Commerce de la Russie*, printed in 1773, consequently before Russia had got possession of the Crimea, in which the author speculates on the ports obtained by the treaty of Kainardjick in 1774. p. 118, we read, that Russia possesses the means of forming a commercial marine on the Black Sea. With respect to commerce it is acknowledged, that such of her merchants as have large capitals, are engaged in that of the Baltic, and that they will not quit a known branch of trade, to commence a new career, which presents considerable risks, and very uncertain, or at least very distant profits; that in general, they are in want of credit, without which neither solid connections, nor extensive business can be established; and that they have not the least notion of the commerce of the Levant, and of the Mediterranean, which are essentially

It is evident that the Russian marine in the Black Sea, an insulated marine, having no communication with the imperial fleet in the Gulph of Finland, cannot support itself against the Turkish navy, even with the most moderate efforts on the part of the latter. The Russians have only the single port of Cherson for their ships of war, a port of no capacity, very inconvenient, and which would require immense labour to put it into a condition to receive fleets (7). Facility of anchoring,

essentially connected with that of the Black Sea, p. 119. Russia cannot help having recourse to strangers to teach her subjects the *elements* of the commerce of the Black Sea. And the author finds, that France is the only power who can effectually support her in this necessary plan. He adds, that Peter I. saw no country in Europe, a connection with which could be more advantageous to his empire than France, relative to the commerce of the Baltic, and with much greater reason he would have thought the same with respect to that of the Black Sea.

BUT, if the commerce of the Black Sea must be carried on, why should not France give the preference to that of the Turks her ancient allies from the time of Francis I.? Why should she suffer a new naval power to get a footing in the Black Sea, which already menaces them, and which in the end must become dangerous to her.

(7) NOTWITHSTANDING all the exertions that Russia can make in her own favour, says the same writer, p. 117. "It is still
un-

choring, advantages of every kind, variety of commodities and naval stores are to be found in

“ undeniable, that without the assistance of foreign powers,
 “ she can never give stability to her establishments on the
 “ coast of the Black Sea; for which reason, it is absolutely
 “ necessary for her to unite with all the powers of Europe,
 “ to negotiate at the Porte, the freedom of the Black Sea
 “ for all their flags. Besides, Russia having obtained by the
 “ treaty of *Kainardjick*, no more than the same privileges
 “ which the nations most favoured by the Ottoman empire
 “ formerly enjoyed, all those nations ought to unite in con-
 “ cert with Russia to obtain a general exemption from the
 “ storehouse tax, that is to say, the liberty to go in and
 “ out of the Black Sea, without being obliged to break bulk.
 “ Without the first of these concessions, the main object of
 “ Russia must be defeated; and without the last, the com-
 “ merce of the Black Sea must be still subjected to duties and
 “ delays, which will absorb its profits in a very high degree.

THE object of Russia then is actually defeated, since the first concession has not been obtained. Do you imagine it will be compassed by means of *Cherson*, and of ten thousand sailor-peasants, or peasant-sailors. Observe that the author, in this passage, wants to have all the nations unite to give the commerce of the Black Sea to Russia; whereas, in another before cited, he gives the French in this respect that privilege almost exclusively. In a word, what Russia has done in the Black Sea, the Emperor wants to do in *the Scheld*; with this difference, that the Emperor possesses flourishing and populous provinces on the banks of this river; consequently the Dutch may be more easily invaded than the Turks.

several

several places on the coast of their rivals. They have nothing to fear for their ships from those destructive worms I have already mentioned. The Turkish fleets, whose port is at Constantinople, are not obliged to remain continually in the Euxine, though she has an arsenal, and her principal rope-yard at *Sinope*: (this city, to which the Russians have just sent a Consul, is much better known, for having given birth to Diogenes.) The Turks, in cases of necessity, can build, equip, and arm upon the spot, with the greatest facility. After a defeat, they can repair and recruit without much trouble, and they will easily make themselves four to one. Let us add, that the inhabitants of the conquered countries, almost all Mahometans, are inclined to the Turks; for notwithstanding the philosophic declarations of the *Ukasses*, the Tartars do not like the Russian government. I speak not of the Greeks, more than twenty thousand of whom the cabinet of Petersburg caused to be massacred in the Morea, or the neighbouring countries, by exciting them to an insurrection, in which it was not able to support them. These unfortunate people cannot remember the Russians with much gratitude. The inhabitants of the islands of the Archipelago, like the Greeks of the Continent, gave themselves up in their turn to the most foolish expectations: they were severe-

ly punished for it, when the Russians disappeared never more to return ; and undoubtedly they retain a warm affection for them.

THE Greeks of the lower empire at Constantinople, were wholly taken up with intrigues, religious ceremonies, and absurd controversies. These dispositions characterised that nation ; an universal bigotry had enervated their souls, and deadened the faculties of the whole empire. The Monks became the only ecclesiastics, and the sole directors of public, as well as of private business. When Mahomet attacked Constantinople ; he could not even suspend for a moment the religious animosities of the inhabitants, who were more anxious about the fittings of the council of Florence, than about the operations of the Ottoman arms (5).

THE Greeks of the present day possess the same character, though not the same importance ; they are totally absorbed in mean intrigues for the Patriarchships of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria ; or for the principalities

(5) SEE Montesquieu's *Considerations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains*, &c. *passim*.

of Walachia and Moldavia. The Turkish policy, which has left them these two principalities, the above four Patriarchships, about one hundred and twenty Archbishoprics and Bishoprics, and the important office of *Dragoman* or first interpreter to the Porte, always bestows these dignities on the highest bidder. The Patriarch of Constantinople, the head of the Greek religion in European Turkey, and who possesses a species of civil jurisdiction (6), purchases his office for about ninety, or one hundred thousand piastras. Compelled to make continual presents to his Turkish protectors, he plunders the Prelates and Monks. The other Patriarchs are obliged to display the same greediness, and to impose contributions of the same kind, in proportion to the value of their places and their influence. The two Princes, or *Hospodars*, who give from fifteen hundred to two thousand purses, that is to say, from one hundred to one hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling, extort from their vassals, sufficient to pay the sums they have borrowed from the Jews, and the payments they make to their patrons. The Turks make it their

(6) THE Patriarch of Constantinople, holds a Divan, or court of justice every week, assisted by twelve bishops; he decides certain causes, and inflicts corporal punishments.

object to obtain money, and the Greeks in all parts of the empire, to pillage, and make themselves odious to each other. I do not pretend to justify this policy, which perhaps after all, is not more corrupt than many others, and which is kept up by the vanity and meanness of the Greeks; but I assert, that though the Greek populace in general, or rather the Monks, or the *Caloyers* and *Papas*, may wish the Czarina, who professes their religion, to be seated on the throne of Constantine, all the families who have pretensions to the Patriarchates, or the two principalities, prefer the present government.

INDEPENDENT of the useless and ostentatious expedition of the Russians to the Archipelago, and the coasts of Syria; their excesses, their manners, their depredations, compared with the moderate measures lately adopted by the Divan, have very much cooled the affection of the Greeks for the Russians; and the latter cannot behold without apprehensions, the revival of that discipline, which rendered the Turks so formidable at the siege of Vienna in 1683, above all, amongst the Janissaries now trained and kept in the garrisons upon the Imperial and Russian frontiers. The policy

policy of the Sultan Mahmud, an indolent and weak prince, enervated this brave Militia to such a degree as to transform his soldiers into a contemptible and profligate populace; and this was the principal cause of all the losses lately sustained by the Ottoman Empire.

BUT, be this as it may; behold the projects of Russia traced through a series of events, which she has either prepared, given rise to, or of which she has availed herself.

THE Commerce of the Mediterranean is inseparably connected with that of the Black Sea. Peter I. knew this. The liberty of navigating and trading in the Mediterranean by the Euxine Sea, was one of the highest points of his ambition, but the unfortunate battle of *Pruth* deprived him of all hopes of obtaining it. The execution of this project, ever uppermost in the minds of his successors, depended on a rival, who could not be brought by any other means but by force of arms, to throw down the barriers which divide the two empires. A war then was indispensable, and it broke out in 1768. The vanquished Ottomans sued for peace; and the liberty of navigation in their seas was one of the principal condi-

tions proposed by the Czarina. Scarcely had she concluded this treaty, when she appropriated the Crimea, that she might give herself new ports; but, above all, a port, in which she might build, receive, and fit out ships of war to protect her merchant men, and to form in the end, a fleet superior to that of the Turks.

ON the other hand, the Czarina has not failed to display her colours in the Mediterranean. Sometimes she alarmed the Venetians by reminding them of Candia and the Morea. Her efforts at Malta had no effect, for there the influence of France, which is to be met with every where, preponderated. Then she attempted to obtain a port on the coast of Barbary, and the harbour and bay of *Arzere* to the east of the coast of *Oran* was even pointed out for the purpose. At another time, she proposed to the English, to purchase of them Minorca, Port Mahon, &c. &c.

ALL these chimerical projects ended in suffering some Russian ships of war to rot in the port of Leghorn. The Czarina even made a semblance of renouncing the Mediterranean as well as the Euxine; the very confined commerce of which can at present be carried on only by her subjects. — She seemed, I say, to renounce it, and
nothing

nothing could be less surprising to those who are convinced that if the Turks have a fleet, an army and money at command, it is impossible for the Russians to reach Constantinople by sea; and that it is not so easy, as Mr. Linguet (8) pretends, to get at it by land.

THAT great man, who wrote the following remarkable lines, saw much farther. “ The Turkish empire is nearly in the same weak state as was the Greek empire formerly; but it will subsist a long time: for, if any prince, in pursuing his conquests, should threaten this empire, the three great commercial powers of Europe know their own interests too well, not to take up its defence instantly.”—And he adds in a note—“ Thus all the projects against the Turk, like that which was planned during the pontificate of Leo X. by which the Emperor was to make his approaches to Constantinople by Bosnia, the King of France by Albania and Greece, and other nations were to embark from their respective ports; all these schemes, I say, either were not serious, or were contrived

(8) WE shall see presently, that this gentleman desires only a week for this conquest.

“ by persons who understood not the true interests
“ of Europe.”

MONTESQUIEU might have added, that if, against all probability, the Czarina should seize upon Romania, Greece, and the Archipelago, the major part of the Russians, particularly those of Petersburg, and of the northern parts, could not do better than quit their frozen climate, to inhabit the conquered countries, which would reduce more than half the Russian empire to a desert. In a word, considering the present circumstances of Europe, the commerce of *Taurida*, supposing it could be made such as the Czarina wishes it to be, would be always precarious; and the Muscovite Exchequer would derive very little benefit from it.

You must observe, Sir, that I only discuss the propriety of things. The Czarina does not stand in need of a manifesto, to appropriate to herself the *Crimea* and *Kouban*; it is easily justified by what she has already done in Poland, by sharing it with Austria (9); and by the example of Stanacroska,

(9) It is pretty remarkable, by the by, that the King of Prussia, who was almost compelled to agree to the partition, (the plan itself being invented by the Cabinet of Petersburg), came in for a tolerable share of it.

chief of the Cossacks, who said to the Czar Peter I. (1) "Father, if you seriously intend to pull this Swedish thorn out of your foot, let me alone. I will march at the head of my Cossacks, and destroy every thing in Finland, men, women, and children. Thus, by the true God, I swear, you will have no longer any enemies in that country; we will make a desert of it, which is better than ten fortresses." This Cossack, I say, is such a maker of manifestoes, as I do not pretend to oppose.

FRUITLESS attempts of the Czarina on the Turkish coast and in the Mediterranean, where she always met with the French, who were become more powerful, since the peace which has effectually separated the Americans from the English, convinced her (2) of the necessity of adopting a new plan, the execution of which might curb France, and put the Russian fleets in a condition to act at a less distance from Petersburg. The King of Prussia

(1) ALGAROTTI, *Voyage de Russie*.

(2) EVEN before the cession of the Crimea, which the Czarina took the direction of, under the pretext of protecting the Tartars, who were rendered independant by the treaty of Kainardjick.

had neither the inclinations nor the means to second his illustrious ally in such a project, besides, it is probable, that he already considered her as capable of becoming his rival in the Baltic. It was therefore necessary, that Catharine should have another co-operator, and she has found one in Joseph II. who, like herself possesses the rage of a maritime commerce, in spite of nature; he joins with her in a compact which threatens to overturn Europe, in order, it is said, to balance the family compact. Let it be observed, that the Emperor did not impart to France, nor the Czarina to the King of Prussia, the articles of this new treaty; and that such a reserve might be considered in a politic view, as a renunciation of all prior alliances.

Nor long after, the Emperor the ally of France, brother-in-law to the King, and uncle to the Dauphin, chose to give a new proof of his regard for Lewis XVI. by declaring to the Marquis Noailles at Vienna, that in future he should not admit at his court, the precedence established by France, to Russia, but should treat the ambassadors of the two courts with an exact equality? You are not ignorant, Sir, that of all the powers of Europe, England was the first, and France the last to give the title of Emperors to the sovereigns of Russia.

In

In 1663, Charles II. granted it to the Czar Alexis Michaelowitz by his ambassador extraordinary the Earl of Carlisle. Since that period the English ambassadors and their wives have submitted to kiss the hand of the Czarinas. You know likewise what the Baron de Breteuil, the ambassador of France said, when such a proposal was made to him. *I shall, without doubt, think myself too happy to kiss the hand of a pretty woman, but Madame de Breteuil has not always the same inclinations as I have.* And Madame de Breteuil went no more to court. The title of Emperor was granted by France, on this express condition, that every new Czar should sign a counter declaration, that this condescension should not in any respect alter the established etiquette, a reservation this, which preserved to France, the precedency she had established. Catharine II. upon her accession to the throne, refused to give this declaration, and contented herself with notifying that things should remain upon their ancient footing; and the King of France ordered his ministers at the different courts of Europe to go and read these counter declarations to the Russian ministers (3). This was acting
suitable

(3) THE warlike Déon, or d'Eon, whom M. Linguet once actually compared to *Bellona*, was charged as Secretary of the Embassy,

suitable to his title and his right. After the peace of 1762, M. Czernichew, the Russian Ambassador at London, made an attempt to assume the precedence at the anniversary ball on the King's birth-day. M. de Chatelet, the French Ambassador, who found him seated, obliged him very peremptorily to quit it, and the next morning sent him a challenge by way of reparation. M. Czernichew was polite, the following day he paid a visit to M. de Chatelet, who probably over night did not expect to receive apologies (4).

It

embassy, to make this lecture to M. de Woronzow the Russian minister at London. *How*, says M. de Woronzow, if I was ambassador, and the Duke de Nivernois was to meet me at the door of the King's closet, would he tread upon my toes to get in before me? He would tread upon your belly, replied d'Eon, and I would cut you in pieces with my broad sword.

(4) By granting to the Czar, the title of Emperor, and Imperial Majesty, it is certain, says Baron Belfield (Political Institutes, Vol. iv. p. 115.) *that Kings have given up their rank in his favour, and can only take place after him.* And wherefore, I would ask the Baron, Is it on the magick word of Emperor, which only signifies *Governor*, that the claim rests? Is it because the Roman Emperor walked before the Kings of Armenia, and of Iberia? Is it because the successor of the *Keyser* of Germany is described under the title of King of the Romans? Or, is it only in virtue of the courtesy of other Sovereigns,

It was immediately after his compact with Russia, that Joseph II. threatened the Ottoman empire, and by that means accelerated the cession of the *Crimea* and *Kouban* to the Russians. He obtained for himself, as a matter of pure convenience, diverse districts in *Moldavia* and *Walachia*, with the navigation of the Danube in the Turkish dominions, of the Black Sea, and the passage of the Hellespont. He had four or five ships which made voyages to India, or rather to China, and returned to Ostend with cargoes of tea, for the

vereigns, and principally that of France? For, in fine, since all this *punctilio* is considered as something in politics, it must really mean something; and when one pretends to judge of the rights of others, as the Emperor has done between France and Russia, it is natural to suppose an examination into one's own. An Emperor of Germany reduced to his city of *Bamberg*, may with impunity demand precedence, and it will be granted to him without difficulty, as it is granted to the Pope. But when he appears to exact it in virtue of a power foreign to his dignity, as well as to the authority of Emperor, one may have reason to be out of humour, and that ill humour may have serious consequences; for we may respect the Emperor, but without forgetting, that even within our memory, France has made one IMPERIAL MAJESTY. In a word, we shall only remark, that Baron Belfield has acknowledged, that France was the last to confer the title of Emperor on the Czar, but he does not say a word of the conditions required by France, which is pretty singular in political institutes.

English

English smugglers to buy up there, and introduce clandestinely into all parts of England. These ships were equipped at *Trieste*, at the bottom of the Adriatic Sea, where the Emperor possesses the little port of *Segna*; one of the earliest returned to *Trieste* to cover the design, which is at present unmasked by the claim he makes upon the Dutch, of liberty to trade to both the Indies.

It was then likewise, that the Emperor seized the revenues of the convents, appropriated to his own use the silver plate of their churches, retrenched their pensions, scraped foreign coins, &c. &c. to augment his treasures, and to have funds sufficient for the vast expeditions he meditated. The Czarina who scarce possesses more money than the Emperor (5), would have followed his example

(5) I AM sensible how far prejudice has given credit to a contrary opinion, totally void of all foundation. Ideas entirely false are formed of the gold and silver mines of Russia. See what the Abbé Chappé says of them in his *Journey to Siberia*. See, also, what the author of *The Essay on the Commerce of Russia* writes; who, notwithstanding, has fallen into some contradictions upon the subject. For example, he says, p. 16. "In 1772, the coin that was struck (from the produce of the
" mines) amounted to two millions, five hundred thousand
" roubles; but this produce is much less one year with ano-
" ther."

example by stripping the Russian monasteries, if the superstition of her country would have permitted her. Hitherto she has contented herself with ordering that all the *ex voto* offerings in gold and silver found in the churches shall be put into a treasury, to be called *The Religious Chest*. At present, the Emperor, who in virtue of his connections with Russia, is to be assisted by sea and land with all the forces of that country, demands of the Dutch, the free navigation of the Scheld.

HE requires then, that all the ports of Zealand should be opened to him, as well as all those belonging to the Dutch in Asia, at Ceylon, upon the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel, in the Ganges, in the Isle of Java, in the Moluccas, and even at Japan, where probably the sailors of his Apostolic Majesty would trample the crucifix under their feet, as it is said those of Holland did,—he requires also, a free entrance into the Colonies

“ther.”—P. 428, he says, “That the produce of the gold mines is so inconsiderable, that it will not suffice to coin enough to answer the demand for circulation.”—And elsewhere he adds, “Siberia is the Peru of Russia.”—The mines of gold and silver worked by the Turks in Romania and *Natalia*, and above all at *Gumushkhana* near *Trebisond*, yield as much at least as the mines of Russia.

of

of Surinam, Essequibo, Demerari, Curracoa, Buenos-Ayres, St. Eustatia, &c. in the West Indies.

PERMIT me now, Sir, to make a few observations.

IN the first place, no one seems to oppose the Emperor's sending ships to China: his predecessors, however, solemnly gave up their East India Company at Ostend (6); but the day is not yet arrived to be afraid of the commerce of Austria.

(6) ON the 19th of December 1722, the Emperor Charles VI. issued his letters patent at Vienna, to establish an India Company, known by the name of the Ostend Company; France, England, Holland, Prussia, and Sweden, opposed it in 1727. The Emperor consented to suspend for seven years, the patent granted to the Company, and all commerce of the low countries with the Indies. In 1731, by the treaty of Vienna between the Emperor and England, and the Act of Concurrence of the States General, this Company and this Commerce was abolished for ever. With respect to the trade to the West Indies, the Act of Concurrence of the Dutch, says, article iv. "That they will conform with good faith to the regulation established by the Treaties of Munster, in every thing that is therein stipulated, with respect to the commerce and navigation of the West Indies." In fine, the Emperor at present consents, it is said, to give up the commerce of India, provided the Scheld is opened to him, and his expences reimbursed.

But

But if the Emperor will establish himself upon the coast of Malabar, or of Coromandel, all parts of which are already occupied, the consent of the Dutch appears to be useless, in case, either the English, or the French should dislike it. Why then address himself exclusively to the Dutch? IS IT NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE THE WEAKEST?

SECONDLY, since his Imperial Majesty will have commerce at any rate, why does not he form establishments upon the unoccupied coasts of Asia, at Siam, at Tonquin, at Cochinchina, and in a word, in all the places unoccupied, and unclaimed by the Europeans. What occasion has he to address himself to the Dutch? IS IT NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE THE WEAKEST?

THIRDLY, with respect to the West Indies, Why must the Dutch open all their Colonies to the Emperor, if it does not suit them? Why does not he demand that his ships should be equally received at Jamaica, at St. Domingo, at Cuba? For it is certain, that they would be confiscated if they were to attempt to trade in any of these Islands? What would he say, if the Dutch were to require to share with him the vineyards of Tokay, or the mines of Kremnitz, as he requires the commerce of both the Indies? Why then does he

E

address

address himself to the Dutch?—Is IT NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE THE WEAKEST? But is the strongest always in the right? — Or, is the thief less criminal because he attacks only women and children?

THE Emperor demands of the Dutch to share with them, their navigation, their native country, their colonies, their commerce; after which, probably he will divide all this again with Russia his intimate Ally (7), who possesses a kind of marine force,

(7) OR, *his Friend and Ally*, as he calls Catharine II. in his Rescript to the Dutch, which by the way, promises us several others, if however, his cannon are not very soon his only instruments of negociation. Whilst I am correcting the present sheet this 12th January 1785, *The Public Advertiser* is put into my hands, wherein I find a translation of a letter written by the Empress of all the Russias to the King of Prussia, in which she declares that she is firmly resolved to support *the claims of the Emperor*, with as much efficacy, as *if the prosperity of the Russian empire was at stake*.

“ NATURE, it is therein said, has given to the low countries the use and advantage of the river in question. Austria alone, in virtue of the law of nature and of nations, is well founded in the exclusive right of the navigation of this river, so that it depends solely on the equity and disinterestedness of Joseph II. whether other nations shall be
“ per.

force, which the Emperor is in want of. I will only suppose for a moment, that this prince has obtained his demand, even with certain modifications, without which Holland could not exist five years : you would immediately see a fleet of Russian men of war anchor in the Scheld, and the Emperor borrowing, purchasing, and building ships of war to form a marine force. *Flushing* and *Middleburgh* would be blocked up ; all the branches of the Scheld invested, the dykes, and sluices besieged.—Figure to yourself Russian, or Imperial seamen, who finding themselves at home in the midst of Dutchmen, would have free access to all the interior parts of the United Provinces ; and you will be no longer astonished that the Batavians should be resolved rather to perish, than to surrender the navigation of the Scheld. Animosities, disputes, smuggling, and war would be

“ permitted to partake of it, since it belongs exclusively to his
“ dominions. The sentiments of Austria merit esteem and
“ attention, whilst the avidity of the Dutch, and the judg-
“ ment they take upon them to pronounce against the house
“ of Austria, by virtue of the treaty of Munster, are evident-
“ ly reprehensible.”

If this is not a piece of British mockery, I must own that I did not expect to see my prophecy so soon verified.

perpetuated. Zealand would be subdued, the reduction of Holland would soon follow, and we should infallibly see a partition take place, like that of Poland, which France and its allies might then oppose too late, and under manifest disadvantages. And take notice, that to penetrating minds, there are not wanting other proofs of the projects of Russia, than the conduct of that court since the first war against the Turks. All its measures have tended to the sole object of a maritime commerce : its armed neutrality, which an able minister very properly called *the artful neutrality*, had no other object but the establishment of a naval power unfortunately before confined to the Gulph of Finland; (I count for nothing in the naval system, the Black Sea to the South, and the White Sea from Archangel to the North) to that Gulph of Finland, which Algarotti, so partial to Russia, calls *a miserable ditch*, where the navy is kept imprisoned by the ice six months in the year, and during the other six, it can only appear in the Baltic, where the Russians annually send some ships to make a naval campaign, but of which the Danes and the Swedes, if they were united, might divide the sovereignty they formerly possessed. If the Russian squadron stirs out of this sea, for ever so short a time, it is under the necessity to winter in foreign ports, at a great distance from its own. It cannot recruit its crews,
repairs

repairs of every kind become difficult, or excessively expensive, and sometimes impracticable; and it may then be said, that the Muscovite ships depend less upon Russia, than upon the foreign powers who give them an asylum.

THESE details will perhaps explain all the Czarina's attempts to have a port in the Mediterranean. They will shew at the same time the absurdity of the projects of Peter I. and of his ruling passion. This man, more singular than great, of whom Rousseau has so well observed, that he had an *imitative genius, not that true genius which creates and makes every thing out of nothing.* This ardent man did not perceive, that an Asiatic government and European manners could never agree together. He thought it was sufficient to WILL. He would make Germans, Dutchmen, Englishmen, and Frenchmen of his subjects, when he should have begun by making them Russians: he would make a formidable power, when he should have begun by establishing a nation; and he did not add any glory to his country, for what glory can there be in the obedience of slaves? " Peter would have ships, says Algarotti, he " would have very large ships, and he would " have them built, and have them under his eyes, " precisely in the very places which were the most

“improper for the purpose (8).” He shewed the same ardour and obstinacy in every thing that regarded either the marine or commerce. What numbers of men did he sacrifice in building *Petersburgh*, situated upon ground taken from the Swedes. *That Petersburgh*, which has been justly called the window through which Russia discovers

(8) THE following fragment of the same author, in *his Journey to Russia*, gives very precise and exact ideas upon this subject. “Experienced workmen think that the Admiralty “and the Arsenal would have been better at Revel than at “*Petersburgh* and *Cronstadt* where they are established. In “fact, the water at Revel is as salt as the Baltic Sea can be, “and the ships would have been preserved much longer there. “The ice does not remain so long as upon the *Neva*; and “the sea being much sooner freed from it, would have enabled them to have gone out much earlier and with less “risk. This is likewise the reason why the Swedish fleets “always put to sea earlier than the Russians; and why the “Dutch get to the whale fishery sooner than the Russians “besieged by flakes of ice in the ports of *Archangel* and in “the *White Sea*. Moreover, say intelligent people, when “the ice entirely disappears, an easterly wind is absolutely “necessary to get out of the river and canal of *Cronstadt*, “and westerly winds generally prevail in that quarter during “the summer. In a word, as they build their ships at *Petersburgh*, they must afterwards sail down to *Cronstadt*, which “cannot be done without danger and great expence. “P. 69 and 70.”

Europe

Europe (9); that *Petersburgh* which will never be any thing but a *favourite without merit*, as was said of the Versailles of Lewis XIV. This prince, who forced and precipitated every thing, who wounded the laws by his customs, and violated his customs by his laws, seriously believed that nature herself owed him the same obedience that he found in his slaves; and in the same manner as he had peopled his wild, silent, and frozen forests

(9) AND observe, that this expression of Algarotti (*Journey to Russia*, p. 17.) was not simply an epigram, as he probably thought it. The Russians are no otherwise Europeans, but in virtue of a declaratory definition of their sovereign, copied almost word for word from Montesquieu. We read the following line in the *Instructions for framing a new code of Laws for the Russian empire*.—Chap. i. § 1. paragraph 6. “RUSSIA IS AN EUROPEAN STATE.”—Paragraph 7. “This is clearly demonstrated by the following observations:”

“THE changes that Peter the Great undertook in Russia, succeeded the more readily, as the manners which prevailed there at that time, and which had been introduced by a mixture of different nations and the conquest of foreign territories, were by no means adapted to the climate, Peter by introducing the manners and customs of Europe amongst the European people under his dominion, found in them, facilities which he did not expect.”—Chap. ii. paragraph 8. I have followed the English translation of *Instructions, &c.* by Michael Tatischev,

forests with birds from the southern countries (1). He was persuaded, that upon his new capital receiving ships, the Russians would become a maritime and commercial nation. Peter did not doubt

chest published with permission, p. 70 and 71. Now we read, in *The Spirit of Laws*, vol. 1. Chap. xiv. edit. Genev. 4to. p. 493. "What rendered this change of the Russian manners
 " more easy, was that the manners of that time, were foreign
 " to the climate, and had been brought thither by a mixture
 " of nations and by conquests. PETER I. IN GIVING THE
 " MANNERS OF EUROPE TO AN EUROPEAN NATION,
 " FOUND FACILITIES WHICH HE HIMSELF DID NOT EX-
 " PECT."

(4) FROM Cronstadt to Petersburg, the Neva is bordered by a forest, which extends along both its banks; and what sort of forest? There are neither tufted oaks, nor ever-green laurels, but the most wretched kind of trees under Heaven. One easily perceives that they are poplars; but that they are quite different from those whose bark covers the sisters of Phaeton, and which shades the banks of the *Po*! In vain did we call home all our attention, in vain did we listen to hear the melodious sounds of those birds, with which the Czar wanted formerly to people this frightful and savage forest, by transporting to it, numerous colonies from the southern parts of his empire; they all perished there in a short time, and did not so much as build any nests in this melancholy abode.

Avia non resonant avibus virgulta canoris.

Journey to Russia, p. 79 and 80.

of

of success when he had added to his dominions, the coasts and provinces of Livonia, the best of the Russian possessions, equally taken away from the Swedes, and which ought to be restored; he no longer doubted, but that the metropolis of universal commerce would be seated in his vast empire.

*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, CUI LUMEN
ADEMPTUM.*

BUT this extraordinary prince who never thought of any thing but his own personal glory, and who wanted to astonish the world, deceived himself. Peter himself was deceived, and the heirs to his projects, and his dominions are likewise deceived. Russia has not, nor she never will have a maritime commerce; she will never have a true marine force, at least not in the south, so long as she is without an establishment in the Mediterranean. What then has she gained by the glory, the projects, and the exertions of that Czar, who is surnamed the *Great*? What did he do for that nation, which he left enslaved, unfortunate, and plunged in debt? The Russians once had a national character, they have none at present. It was this character which it was necessary to strengthen and unfold, in order to prepare this rude
but

but simple people, by indirect, gradual, and wise operations to receive the influence of the enlightened manners of Europe. Russia once set free, would have adopted them rapidly. But for want of this preparation, the Russians, instead of gaining, have been considerable losers, by those internal revolutions, and external relations that have been so much applauded. The merchants of that empire, formerly renowned for their integrity, are as notorious at present as the Chinese merchants for their finesse, to say nothing worse. The Boyards or Nobles, in losing their roughness, have for the most part acquired nothing but more polished manners. The women were formerly more chaste, marriages were happier, their manners were less elegant, but more honest. Once more then let us ask, what has this Czar that is so much boasted of done for his country? He gained battles, built ports, dug canals, erected arsenals; nothing more was wanting for all this than money and the labour of slaves. What has he done, I do not mean for the constitution of his country, I do not mean for the political and civil liberty of his subjects; but I mean for agriculture and the population of his empire? Yet, agriculture and population are the riches of a despotic more than of a limited monarch. Nature has made Russia an inland, Peter would make her a
maritime

maritime power, and looking upon the nations who are favoured by the sea, with a jealous and greedy eye, he ran counter to the very elements to become like those nations. He conceived absurd and monstrous plans; these plans have overpowered his successors, who being his servile imitators, have depopulated and ruined their dominions, without perceiving that the immensity of so many projects would crush their weakness. O Russians! I have never had a wish to calumniate, or to insult you, you merit pity, not contempt; you might have been, you may still be happy, you have a right to be so; it is those who govern you, who alone perpetuate your misfortunes. At the same time, that I expose their errors, their mismanagement, and their ambitions to all Europe, I would diminish your evils, I would meliorate your lot. O Russians, believe me, neither conquests, nor splendid courts, nor academies recruited from foreign countries, nor collections of pictures and medals, nor mercenary panegyrists, render a people happy. Your sovereign is determined to have renown—be it so—have not her hundred mouths already sufficiently celebrated her? If she does not deceive herself as to the true means of constituting your happiness, her first care should be to set bounds to her empire, not to extend it at the price of your blood
and

and labour. The Czar Peter himself said, *I have already too much land; it is water I want.* Why did he not add? *I must dispense with water, since nature has refused it to me, and I cannot obtain it, but by usurping the dominions of other powers.* Why did he not also say, *I have too many soldiers, too many slaves, I want men; but men only grow under the shadow of the tree of liberty.*

If the Emperor obtains the Freedom of the Scheld, which seems to interest more than the liberty of his own subjects and neighbours, the plans of the Czarina will be no longer chimerical; she will find in this river an asylum for her ships, which she has so long desired, out of the Baltic. She has no commercial marine, she wants to have a military one, and very soon she will have well founded hopes of both. The Russian fleet in future, within reach of Petersburgh, will become in the Scheld, the protectress of the imperial vessels, and of the Emperor's growing marine force; it will winter without danger in the midst of the Dutch.

It is probable,—what do I say? it is certain, that this freedom once obtained, the English, whom the Emperor will not fail to invite into the Scheld by an advantageous treaty, will protect
this

this new arrangement of things. Under their auspices, the Imperialists, joined to the Russians, will form a powerful marine force; slowly if you will, but increasing every day. Holland separated for ever from Flanders and Zealand, will be null; England for a short time, and then the Emperor and the Czarina will be absolute masters of the Germanic ocean, of the Baltic, and very soon of all the seas; and that in spite of the marine of the house of Bourbon, which can no longer exist, because she will have no wood proper for the construction of ships, no masts nor other naval stores which come from the north, but under the good pleasure of these three powers. The hopes of being revenged on France and Holland; the bewitching desire of seeing herself at the head of a naval confederacy, which is always represented as a necessary counterpoise to that family compact, now become so formidable by the alliance of France with Holland; the restless disposition of a haughty people, humbled, but not accustomed to humiliation, in a word, every thing combines to draw England into this project; but the nature of it is such as to prevent all hostilities on her part for the present.

IN the actual situation of affairs, (it cannot be too often repeated, for the British power is the
fear-

scare-crow set up to frighten the natural protector of Holland) the English will observe a strict neutrality, and will content themselves perhaps with blowing the fire, without renewing those eternal wars which please ambition more than they terrify it. Why should they expose themselves in an unfavourable moment to the dangers of a war, the success of which is uncertain, and which would necessarily bring on their bankruptcy, while a neutrality will be very beneficial to them, above all if Russia declares against Holland? Fatigued, discontented, overloaded with debts, do they not stand in the greatest need of peace? Their sovereign cannot but wish the continuance of it, not only as King, but as Elector of Hanover, as the father of a numerous offspring, and as the friend of his people. Upon the least hostility commencing, the German dominions would be invaded, instead of which he may marry one of his daughters to the son of the Statholder; which is no small object for so good a father. Besides, his present ministers have neither experience, steadiness, nor public confidence to engage in a war; they must be influenced by the circumstances of the nation, and very soon by popular murmurs, which will grow every day louder and louder, as the taxes keep always increasing.

THE greatest part of the English detest the Dutch, against whom their famous navigation act was chiefly levelled, an act, which perhaps ought to make them looked upon as the enemies of mankind: they hate the Dutch because they are not Englishmen, because they are merchants as well as themselves, and because they resolved to remain neuter last war. The major part of the English nation wish success to the Emperor, by which it should seem as if the misfortunes or destruction of Holland would indemnify Great Britain for her losses. The horrid wars that such a revolution would produce, appear as nothing to minds fascinated by the hopes of revenge. The English do not perceive, that opening the Scheld will prove very hurtful to them in the end: their present hatred to the Dutch, and to the French who protect them, deprives them of all forecast. But their animosity against the latter has lost that audacity which characterised it before the last war; and our marine, which the port of *Cherbourg* is going to render so formidable in the channel, our marine, I say, is no longer contemptible in their eyes. If the example of M. de Grasse has shewn them that intrigue may still dictate in France the choice of weak men, our D'Orvilliers, our Suffren, and our Vaudreuil, have convinced them, that we have good naval officers. In fact, the English

lish are so sensible of their present situation, that they hardly dare to face it. Their intestine quarrels degenerate into wrangling; they enervate that vigorous people, who will do eternal honour to the human specie, from the moment that their wisdom represses their ambition, and subdues their pride. The only statesman who understands the true interest of England and foreign politics, and who has extensive views, free from national prejudices; this very man is universally feared, and but little loved; so far is the nation, which he saved by the late peace, from being able to judge of, or set a true value upon him. It is much to be doubted if he was restored to office, if he would succeed, for it is certain that upon his restoration, if he could acquire influence, he would not adopt violent measures. Be this as it may, Great Britain must suffer more calamities before she is cured of that mercantile intolerance, the natural and necessary effect of which is, to multiply her enemies daily. The English will, and believe they can, undertake every thing, and not being willing to let others do any thing, they perform every thing much dearer than others. It is thus, that after ruining themselves, they have alienated the affections of other nations. At present they not only are not in a condition to go to
war

war themselves, but they can no longer command others to do it. When one has always been accustomed to pay one's allies well, if we have no longer any money left, we must not be surprised if we have no longer any allies. The Europeans as a military power, or rather as Assassins formed into regiments (2) will be driven in a short time from India, and I bless God for it. The Indians at last have found out that their tyrants are not invincible, and that they may experience in their turn, the humiliation of being obliged to surrender at discretion (3). But while we are expecting this happy event, so justly merited, and so necessary for the peace of Indostan, and even for that of Europe; an event which cupidity will retard as long as possible, but which it would be prudence to prepare for; the French marine force, joined to that of the Dutch, has, by means of the Bay of Trinqueemale in the Island of Ceylon, most assuredly a decisive superiority in the Gulph of Bengal.

(2) SEE the excellent speech of Mr. Burke in the House of Commons, on the 1st December 1783.

(3) CERTAIN advice has been received from India of the tragical fate of General Matthews, his officers and soldiers, who so well merited their fate, that the friends of humanity can hardly pity them.

The English fleet during the adverse Monsoon is obliged to winter at Bombay on the opposite coast. We went formerly to the Isle of France, whereas at present by remaining at Trinquemale, we shall winter in the Gulph itself; and as soon as the sea is open, all the establishments in this gulph are at the mercy of our fleet, whose rivals cannot get there, till they have sailed along all the western coast of the Peninsula, and turned the Island of Ceylon. To obviate this dreadful inconvenience, the English are attempting to form a port of this nature, upon one of the arms of the Ganges (4); but even when they have it, their fleet will always be inferior to the combined fleets of

(4) THIS very important fact is hitherto unknown by the public, even in England.—The following are the particulars.

THE Ganges, or rather its most western branch which the English call the river *Haagly*, the only river frequented by European ships, has two entrances for large vessels, between the banks of sand that it collects at its mouth. Three leagues below the road of *Coulpi*, a natural canal of seven or eight leagues in length detaches itself from this river and communicates with the sea. The breadth of this canal is near a mile at its source, and two or three at its extremity, and is capable of receiving the largest ships. This extremity where it disembogues itself, is as easy, and much safer than the entrance of the Ganges itself, coming by the road of *Balafor*, and its entrance towards *Coulpi*, does not present any inconvenience.

It

of France and Holland. This is an advantage of the greatest importance in case of a war, for which we are indebted to our alliance with Holland. The Cape is another. This place so essential for ships to put into, either in going to, or returning from India, is peculiarly so to the English. We have indeed the Isles of Bourbon, and the Isle of France which the Cape supplies with corn. But how much more advantageous it will be, if the English should go to war, to be able to deprive them of the shelter of the Cape? Their ships will then be obliged to proceed directly to India; and those which take the route of the canal of Mosambique, can only touch at Madagascar, and at Anjouan,

It is in a creek near this entrance, that the new port is situated, which the English intend to make the *Portsmouth* of India. The shipping will harbour there in perfect safety during the monsoon, and may careen and refit with the greatest ease. The works of this port were begun several years since by a private person, the proprietor of the spot, by virtue of a charter obtained from the Governor General and Council of Bengal, afterwards annulled by the same authority; but at present it appears that the design is renewed, and prosecuted with vigour. In reality, this canal flowing from the river Hoogly has been known for a long time by mariners, but it was frequented only by the Indian coasters, who called it the river *Baratbla*. The English to whom it belongs, in virtue of concessions obtained by Lord Clive, give it the name of *Chandel-Creek*. See, *Reports of the House of Commons*.

which becomes very hazardous because they may be intercepted there.

Do you believe Sir, that after such a long voyage on the high seas, they will arrive with complete crews, and in a good condition to encounter the French and the Dutch? The French who, independent of the war of 1756, which can only be compared to the difference between sickness and health, have always had the advantage over the English ship to ship? The Dutch, whom an old French saying places at the head of military seamen. "If they are English, said the French mariners of the fine age, (the age of Lewis XIV.) we will beat them, and even if they are Dutch, still we will beat them."

AND observe, in fact, what the officers of the latter, who had never seen service, dared to do lately, when they were permitted to fight (5).
Let

(5) THE English who make it a principle to despise their enemies, but who met with severe treatment from them in the last war, particularly in America, despised the Dutch more than any other when they attacked them. It was openly declared throughout England, that those trading people, enervated by a long peace, were become insensible to every species of

Let it be added, that as much as our navy falls short in the art of cruizing, and intercepting fleets of merchant ships, an art, which had we possessed, would have forced the English from the first campaign to have made peace; so much must the Dutch be superiorly skilled in it, since no mercantile people navigate the seas so much as they do. In this respect, their alliance with us must infinitely controul the English while they are determined to consider us as their natural enemies, to educate their children in those horrid principles (6), and to rival a nation, who as friends could

of glory, and totally incapable to resist the English. The squadron of the intrepid *Zoutman* cruelly undeceived them. They did not expect a victory to be gained by him, which resembled that of Pyrrhus. Only a small number of Englishmen, who disdained these miserable, national prejudices, had the spirit to admire Admiral Parker for having done justice to his brave enemies.

(6) OUR royal and noble navy think it infinitely beneath them to convoy our fleets of merchantmen. This is one of its most essential distinctions from the royal navy of England, which has this further advantage, that every citizen may become an officer in the service. It is not sufficient to have SUFFRENS, there must be officers to manage the sailors. The strength of the English navy consists in the corps of lieutenants; many of whom in time of peace command merchant-

could do every thing for their prosperity : but who as enemies may crush them some time or other, because the contest is too disproportioned.

If then there ever was a political combination formidable to England, it must undoubtedly be our present alliance with Holland. And why then does not Great Britain join in it ? What prevents her enjoying all the advantages of it, and in concert with Spain, united to these powers, forcing all Europe to be at peace ?—Be this as it may, far from interfering in the business of the Scheld, or uniting with the powers who would invade it ; the English will flatter themselves with the hopes, that France will ruin herself by a continental war, and that she may afterwards crush her at a small expence. But, if upon the Emperor's first decisive operation, the French troops should seize upon the Austrian Netherlands, upon those Netherlands the administration of which in the years 1747, and

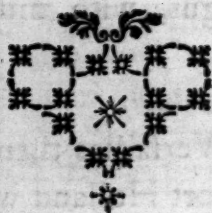
men ; and in general, they are taken from the mass of the people. The well informed English complain very much that of late years, the command of their men of war is given thro' favour to inexperienced officers, and that their navy will very soon experience from it the greatest inconveniencies. Be this as it may, the royal navy of England is destined to protect its mercantile fleets, and it does perform this service effectually.

1748, yielded forty three millions of livres a year (7) independent of the militia, which Marshal Saxe obliged them to furnish, if I say, the French troops should take possession of those provinces, and bar the entry into them against the immortal Joseph; and if another army intrenched behind the Rhine, should patiently lay wait for the Austrian legions; this prince would probably have reason to repent of his precipitation; instead of which if France contents herself with keeping armies of observation on foot, she will anticipate the expences of a war, without being engaged in one, and yet find herself forced into action after one or two campaigns, with much greater disadvantage.

THE cabinet of Versailles then, has the strongest motives to support Holland with all its forces, The alliance of these two powers becomes a protection on the part of France. And in sound policy, as well as morality, the strong power ought to protect its weak neighbour, it is an act of jus-

(7) SEE a very curious Memoir intituled, Doubts and Questions concerning the Treaty of Versailles, between the King of France, and the Empress Queen of Hungary. London, 1778.

tice, if the strong is not its ally ; it is only fulfilling a duty if it is its friend.—But it is high time to take a view of the accumulated assertions and objections thrown out with so much bitterness against the Dutch, and above all by the author of *the Political, and Civil Annals of Europe, &c.*



LETTER



LETTER III.

Projicit ampullas & sesquipedalia verba.

Examination of No. 88 and 89 of the POLITICAL ANNALS, &c. and of some other publications, on the navigation of the Scheld.

MOST assuredly it requires great fortitude to descend, from an useful, and considering the circumstances of it, not an uninteresting discussion, to the examination of a pamphlet, every page of which proves, to any man who has travelled, consulted foreigners, opened any books, or only cast his eyes on the geographical charts, that the author of the Annals does not possess even the most slender preliminary knowledge, without which it is impossible to write upon the question.

question concerning the Freedom of the Scheld. Let us have this necessary courage, for the cause of the Dutch amply merits it; and let us endeavour to enliven at least, by particulars, a criticism which of itself would be too tiresome. It would be very difficult for me to follow M. Linguet's plan step by step, since my weak understanding cannot even guess at it. This indefatigable writer, accustomed for a long time to disdain all connection of ideas, seems to be more employed about that of chapters. With divisions and subdivisions, and paragraphs, he sketches, he builds, and he props up a system, and if the work in other respects is destitute of method, this defect, a trifling one without doubt in a man of genius, is amply compensated by the astonishing grandeur of the expressions, and the incomparable richness of the metaphors. Let us see, however, with what facts, and with what arguments M. Linguet supports the terrible denunciations, that in his wrath, he pronounces against the Dutch.

I THINK I have proved, Sir, in my first letter, that neither the law of nature, so foreign to the actual state of affairs, and the very name of which the author of *the Theory of Civil Law* ought not to have presumed to pronounce; nor the positive law

law (8), which was never more evident, nor more incontestible than in the cause of the Dutch; nor political necessity, which dictates their resistance too clearly, can be brought in evidence in favour of the Emperor.

I THINK I have shewn in my second letter, that the claim of the Freedom of the Scheld is a meditated plan, a plot which has been hatched long since, and which threatens the repose, the constitution, and even the liberties of Europe.

To these arguments which M. Linguet has not foreseen, to facts which he himself does not call in question, what does his pompous manifesto oppose?

At last, the fatal signal has made the borders of the Scheld resound, the Emperor's ministers had declared, that the first gun that should be fired, would be considered by his Majesty as a declaration of war; the Dutch have not only fired a single gun, but a broadside. In this commencement of

(8) It would be difficult to discuss the rights of the Dutch in this respect, in a more nervous and sensible manner than it has been done in the supplements to the *Leyden Gazette*, No. ci. cii. &c. *Reflections on the Vienna Gazette*.

hostilities none were wounded but a bass-viol and a porridge pot (9). "Though the river was not bloody, yet this MITIGATED VIOLENCE, is not the less to be considered as an outrage to the sovereign whom it braves, and to the people whom it subjects to an act of injustice. If ever a sovereign was excusable for appealing to his sword, so, in my opinion, is the deliverer of the Scheld (1)."

THE Austrian Netherlands are not the only countries in Europe, that present tokens of decay to attentive travellers. A part of Germany, Spain, and above all Italy, at every step, excites A COMPASSIONATE ADMIRATION (2)."

"THIS is not the case in the provinces watered by the Lys, the Dender, and the Scheld. It is true, they do not any longer exhibit the face of their ancient prosperity, *neither do they shew those symptoms of a lethargy, which would explain the eclipse* (3)."

(9) *Annales Politiques, Civiles & Littéraires*: Tome xi. No. 88. p. 443.

(1) *Annales Politiques*. No. 88. p. 444.

(2) P. 445.

(3) P. 446.

“ LOUVAIN, Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, are no
“ longer those prodigies of population, which al-
“ most realised the fables of the poets; these
“ cities with their hundred gates, each of which
“ produced an army; yet, neither are they reduced
“ to an heap of ruins.”

“ It is perceivable throughout this country,
“ that some invincible obstacle opposes in a soil
“ so well disposed, and amongst a people so well
“ organised) the good that nature wishes to do
“ there to mankind; and the ardent desire of the
“ inhabitants to second the views of nature in their
“ behalf (4).”

COUNSEL TO THE FACT.—For, “ the wounded
“ porridge pot, and bas-viol — the mitigated
“ violence, and compassionate admiration — the
“ lethargy that would explain the eclipse; and
“ the cities with an hundred gates, each of which
“ produced an army, may be strokes of eloquence,
“ or, *they may also be downright nonsense*, at all
“ events they prove nothing. Let us search then
“ for facts, which alone can support political
“ reasoning.”

(4) P. 448.

" BUT it is principally when we arrive at the
 " gates of Antwerp ; at the canal of the Scheld,
 " which bathes its walls, that the supposition of
 " this *destructive obstacle* becomes necessary. Till
 " you arrive there, all is fecundity in its highest
 " magnificence ; and riches in all their pomp ; it
 " is an universal contest between labour and in-
 " dustry, to people, to vivify every thing. Leap
 " but over a single wall,—and all is silent as death :
 " the banks of the finest river in Europe are struck with
 " the same aridity as the Deserts of Arabia (5)."

THE Scheld, "*that superb and majestic river,*"
 the finest in Europe, as M. Linguet calls it, who
 probably does not know neither the Tagus, nor
 the Guadalquivir, nor the Ebro, nor the Garonne,
 nor the Loire, nor even the Meuse in Holland ;
 and who does not recollect that there is a Thames ;
 this Scheld is a river full of mud, which runs be-
 tween turf banks and wooden piles, and is border-
 ed with slime and coarse grass. The whole course
 of its two branches, within the extent of the
 Dutch territories, has been formed by the hands
 of Dutchmen, so that independant of every treaty,
 the Scheld, ought, in the name of the law of na-

(5) P. 448.

ture, which has been so often quoted in this debate, to belong to those who made it for themselves alone, as they formerly did the provinces of Holland and Frizeland (6). Its two banks, which far from being *struck with aridity*, are incessantly exposed to inundations; these two banks are the produce of ages of uninterrupted labour, renewed daily. Without the Dutch dykes, the most admirable monuments of human industry and patience, the Scheld, *the windings* of which are are hardly perceptible, would not flow beyond Antwerp. Its stagnated waters scattered at hazard, would form only shallow lakes, or immense marshes, inaccessible to ships, and perhaps to every kind of navigation. Its mouths would be more useless to commerce than those of the Po, whose current less serpentine and more rapid, clears at least, its diverse entries into the sea.

AND the Dutch have not only formed the course of the two branches of the Scheld; they have not

(6) THIS is an expression of Montesquieu,—Holland and Frizeland were not yet made.—They were for the most part lands buried under water, which are rendered at last fit for the habitations of men.

only kept them up from Fort St. Anne to the sea, but without their great attention, the canals as well as the entrances to this river would be impracticable for vessels of a certain burthen; besides which numerous sea marks, and buoys floating along its banks, and fires kept at all the most dangerous and remarkable points; all at the expence of the states, indicate night and day, the course that ships ought to steer. The Emperor demands a free and unlimited navigation, he will have the Scheld opened to him, and he does not offer even to contribute his quota towards the expences of buoys, sea marks, light-houses and above all to keep up the dykes. Lewis XIV. in all his intoxications of power and glory, never dictated laws in a more imperious stile. “ In vain does
“ the Scheld ebb and flow twice a day, as it were
“ to render its presence more acceptable, and its
“ docility more seducing. In vain it solicits at
“ at the feet of its ramparts, which it cherishes
“ and would enrich, those convoys and those ex-
“ peditions which made its glory and their opu-
“ lence. A mournful taciturnity is all the
“ answer she could make; instead of those bril-
“ liant fleets which procured her the grateful ac-
“ knowledgements of all Europe, she now only
“ carries

“ carries to sea, only the opprobrium of her impotency and the humiliation of her inutility (7).”

I KNOW several honest folks who admire this figure, and I have already seen it quoted in some of those papers which periodically instruct the universe. With all my soul, I pardon its admirers, for since the choice absurdities of Mascarille, in reality, I have never read any thing more admirable than *the tempting docility, and the palpable presence, and the opprobrium of impotency, or the humiliation of inutility. The Scheld and the mournful taciturnity, the only answer it can make.*—May M. Linguet for the honour of the French language, long enjoy the exclusive privilege of such admiration!

QUI BAVIAM NON ODI, AMET TUA CARMINA,
MÆVI.

BUT Sancho would say, *comparison is not argument. The brilliant fleets go to Flushing and Middleburgh; where then are the opprobrium and humiliation for the muddy waters of the superb Scheld?*

“ UPON this throne (the people of Brabant are made to say) the shade of which has hitherto

(7) Ibid.

“ been only fatal ; Providence hath placed a
 “ prince, equitable, and firm, as well as en-
 “ lightened ; extending his views as well as his
 “ power, from the borders of the Adriatic Sea, to
 “ those of the Germanic ocean ; he has blushed to
 “ see one of his finest possessions entangled in a
 “ destructive net, of which he is himself obliged
 “ to be the conservator and guarantee (8).”

M. LINGUET forgets the Black Sea, to which the Emperor, *by extending his views*, as well as his equity, has opened to himself the seven mouths of the Danube, a river very differently *majestic* and *superb*, from the Scheld. It is true, that this navigation is of no use for *the shade of the throne* of his Imperial Majesty, which seems to have more motion, than size in its head. It is even probable, that notwithstanding M. Linguet's prophecy, which requires no more than eight days to overthrow the Ottoman empire (9) ; the Turks before ten years are expired, may exclude the Austrian power from this navigation for ever.

(8) IBID. p. 451, 452.

(9) *Eight days and a victory may introduce into the seraglio, a regimen entirely new, and exhibit a woman triumphant within those walls, where none of her sex ever experienced any other lot but slavery.* No. 89. p. 10.

“ BUT is it the same thing, with respect to *the sentence of death, pronounced against the Scheldt?*
“ Could it at any time be looked upon as the
“ price of pretended obligations to the sovereigns
“ of this river?”

“ WHAT! that he may not appear ungrateful
“ to the united provinces, must the Count of
“ Flanders, the Duke of Brabant be, to the end
“ of the world, *the gaoler of his subjects, the spoiler*
“ *of his dominions! the complaisant executor of a po-*
“ *litical arrest, ruinous to himself—the servile bearer*
“ *of a lettre de-cachet expedited by Holland, under the*
“ name of obligation, in contempt of the rights
“ of nature and of society, must he hold his own
“ domains in chains, and put the finest river in
“ *Europe in the Bastille (1)?*”

I READILY comprehend why this very fine style is so much admired by many readers. But I, who do not possess a fine style, and who am obliged to understand what I read, and what I write, find very great difficulty in comprehending this.

PAGE 436, the Scheld falls into a lethargy :
p. 450, it is impotent; p. 461, sentence of death

(1) *IBID.* p. 461, 462.

is pronounced against it; p. 462, this sentence is commuted for a *lettre de-cachet*, and the finest river in Europe is put into the Bastile; p. 488, it has been mutilated (2); p. 500, they want to bring to life again its dead carcase, its benumbed skeleton (from whence it follows that the Scheld died in the Bastile, an event which I believe never happened to any river before (3). Fortunately, at p. 7, of the following volume, this *pacific and benevolent river rises again*, to be metamorphosed into a volcano, which will dart its flames over all Europe.

THESE, without doubt are magnificent metaphors, but after all, what is this Scheld, *condemned to die*, then *struck with a lettre de-cachet*, then *in the Bastile*, then *impotent*, then *mutilated*, then *dead*, then *a corpse*, then *raised from the dead*, and then *a volcano*; without reckoning a thousand other

(2) LIKE those animals whom their covetous owners will not suffer to be taken from their studs, till they have destroyed in them the sources of fecundity.

(3) "HOWEVER limited the revivification may be of this skeleton, so long benumbed by captivity, how slow soever the progress may be, still it will be more honourable for its master to command an animated body than a corpse." Page 500.
meta-

metamorphoses? This Scheld of M. Linguet does not unaptly resemble the Proteus of the Georgics.

*Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,
Ignemque, horribilemque feram, fluviumque liquentem.*

BUT in the name of common sense, what do all these figures heaped upon one another, or rather this incoherent stuff prove, admitting it to be less ridiculous than it is? How can the diminution of the commerce of the Catholic low-countries since the 15th and 16th centuries, be attributed to the interdiction of the Scheld? What! was it not the religious despotism and the finance ordinances of the Spanish branch of the house Austria,—was it not its inquisitors and hangmen, its guards and custom-house officers, its religious and civil wars, that obliged commerce and industry to fly from these countries? Or, is it, because the Dutch govern a part of the Scheld which belongs to them, that London has received such a number of manufacturers and workmen, natives of Ghent, Bruges, Mechlin, and Tirlement (4).

(4) THE three last named cities, amongst others, whose decay was prior to that of Bruges and Antwerp, in the fourteenth century were crowded with weavers and drapers.

Is it not rather owing to the English, the Dutch, and the French taking advantage of the misfortunes of the Catholic low-countries to establish commercial markets for manufactures and works of art, which had been dispersed, destroyed, and annihilated by a brutal and senseless government, that those countries have not recovered their former prosperity? Is it not above all owing to the insolence and avidity of the Austrian directors of the revenue, who frighten away commerce? Will the trade which Germany, and all the Northern countries of Europe carry on with Holland; or even that of a great many provinces of France, when the canal of Picardy shall be finished, have any other vent than by the low-countries? Could it go in search of another much longer route in the ports of the channel, without being subject to a great number of restrictions, and exclusive privileges, with which a tyrannical and rigid finance administration would load it? Let us add the extortions of France (5), for the war of prohibitions is always reciprocal. And is it the Freedom of the Scheld, or the freedom of thought, that is of

(5) An hundred crowns are exacted from every Austrian boat that passes by Condé, to get at Tournay and the rest of Flanders.

the greatest consequence to the trade in books, for which the low-countries are so happily situated? Is it the war with which the Emperor threatens Holland, or his terrible edict against libels, that will make that branch of commerce flourish? The cities of Luxemburgh and Namur supported by the scanty expenditure of their garrisons; Louvain peopled only with students and professors (6). Mechlin, whose inhabitants are all attorneys, or judges; Mons, Tournay, Ypres, Ghent, Bruges, formerly so powerful and rich, but at present so poor and deserted; do all these cities expect prosperity from the Freedom of the Scheld? Does not the opulence of Bruges, Ghent, Courtray, Menin, Ypres, Furnes, Alost, Tournay, and of all Flanders, a much finer province than Brabant, depend more upon the improvement and safety of the harbour of Ostend, than upon the navigation of the Scheld being granted to the people of Antwerp. You talk of the prosperity of Holland, and because you envy her, you calumniate her.—Well! but is it not in her valour, in her œconomy, in her industry, in her distant navigations, in her

(6) It is remarkable enough, considering this circumstance, that the chair of the professor of civil law in the University of Louvain has been vacant upwards of three years.

Memoires Historiques des Pays bas Autrichiens. Tom. ii. p. 204.

well managed fisheries, in her opulent colonies, in her great attention to preserve peace (7); in fine, is it not, above all, in her liberty, rather than in shutting up the Scheld, that Holland has found the sources of her prosperity? Was the navigation of the Scheld forbidden, when the Dutch accomplished a revolution, and obliged Spain to sign an

(7) JOHN DE WIT. (Mem. part ii. chap. 2.) says, one need only to read the *Register of the Admiralty of Amsterdam, and of the other cities to be convinced, that since our peace with Spain, our commerce and navigation have increased one half*. It is very astonishing that this passage should be quoted to prove that the prosperity of Holland was owing to shutting up the Scheld. Read chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, of these Memoirs; and you will find what an immense commerce Holland carried on at the beginning of the *seventeenth* century; it is more than doubtful whether she transacts so much at present. *That city, says the same great man, speaking of Antwerp as it was in the fifteenth century, the greatest commercial city that ever existed in the world: that city, nevertheless, as well as all the other cities of Brabant and Flanders, were too distant, and by no means convenient for establishing the cod and herring fisheries, or to carry on that branch of commerce with so much advantage as in Holland.* Chap. 8. This is an answer amongst a thousand others, to those who pretend that the Dutch refuse the navigation of the Scheld to the Emperor, because the prosperity of Amsterdam will be at an end, if the people of Antwerp can traverse Zealand.—*Controversy upon the liberty of the Scheld, and the effects which may result from it, between M. R. ** and M. De *** London 1781, p. 24.

eternal

eternal condemnation of its tyranny, by acknowledging the independence of its former subjects—revolted—and conquerors in all parts of the globe?

YE Flemings! ye who envy the Hollanders! why would you not be free! why will you not yet be so! why do you not free yourselves, before you set your rivers free! and if you will not, how dare you be jealous of a free people!

SHAKE OFF THE YOKE, this is the proper gratitude which the Austrian low-countries owe to the authority of a single man, for numberless extortions and outrages, of which the Flemings, above all other people, ought to preserve remembrance;—extortions which the ravages of all those wars that their country has been the theatre of, and in which they had no other interest but that of belonging to far distant masters, have highly aggravated!

As for the gratitude which M. Linguet requires from the Dutch, *for the double intervention of the house of Austria in the year 1672, upon the famous invasion of Lewis XIV. without which, says he, the republic would have disappeared from the face of the earth;* I answer clearly, the fact is false. The Elector of Brandenburg alone acted in favour of the Dutch, in that dreadful struggle of the two
first

first powers of Europe against the republic whose destruction they had sworn. The house of Austria gave itself little or no concern about the safety of Holland. Since it is become necessary to instruct M. Linguet, we will quote for him (amongst many others) the authority of the King of Prussia. This prince says, speaking of the war of 1672. "The successes of Lewis XIV. encouraged his ambition, and the terror of his arms kept the two houses of Austria in a state of inaction.— *The Emperor who had quietly seen Holland subdued,* "was roused when the safe-guards of the empire were at stake, he broke with France, and it was perhaps the only war, in which the house of Austria has engaged for the defence of Germany (8)." We will also quote the authority of the *Historical and Political Memoirs of the Austrian Netherlands*. These memoirs, composed by order of the Emperor, have been printed at Brussels in the course of this year (9); and what is very remarkable, by the way, is, that great pains are taken in them, to prove his Imperial Majesty's right to the duchy of Burgundy (1) and to Dunkirk,

(8) MEMOIRS for the History of Brandenburg. Part i. p. 84. edit. 1754.

(9) I WRITE this at the end of December, 1784.

(1) *Memoires Historiques*, &c. Tom. ii. chap. 4.

of which it is therein said, JOSEPH II. alone ought to have the disposal (2). These memoirs which will

(2) IBID. tom. i. p. 94. It is very strange, that in defiance of such a well known truth, the Emperor's writer says, p. 159. —“ The Dutch losing sight of every thing which they owe to “ the house of Austria, *which had preserved them from total annihilation in 1672.*” This useful and well composed work, is in other respects both partial and inaccurate. Let us quote some succinct proof of this: the author, as might be expected, is no friend to the King of Prussia. The sudden and monstrous growth of the house of Brandenburg favored, he says, by the sinister policy of the British ministry, had already deranged and overset the political system of Europe. — This evidently means, that the establishment of an equilibrium of power in Germany is a monstrous thing, and that the political system of Europe cannot be restored but by the house of Brandenburg refraining from all controul over that of Austria, and suffering it to keep the empire in submission. Page 206. “ Their Imperial Majesties, the father and mother of the present Emperor, usually consulted delicacy of “ sentiments rather than the conditions of treaties.” Art. i. chap. iv. of the second volume, has for its object, the *establishment of the claim of his Imperial Majesty to the Dutchy of Burgundy.* This claim bears date in the reign of Lewis XI. who after the death of Charles the Bold, “ seized on the “ Dutchy of Burgundy, under the pretext, that this province “ having been given in appendage to Philip of France, furnished the Bold, son of King John, it reverted in full right “ to that crown, for want of heirs male.” It appears to me, and I think it will be evident to all honest writers; that this

pretext

will not be accused of partiality against the Emperor, solemnly declare, "that *the Count de Monterey*,
 " *Governor*

pretext was the best founded title imaginable. In a word, as a mere matter of curiosity, we wish the Emperor's writer would recollect, that the chamber of accounts of Blois preserve with respect to its jurisdiction, certain claims to all the domains, which formerly belonged to the counts of Blois, of the house of Orleans, even to those belonging to princes who have been deprived of them by superior force, such, for instance, as the Milanese and other territories in Italy, which of right belong to the house of Orleans, of which house was Lewis XII. It is on account of this claim, that the chamber of accounts of Blois send a deputation once in twenty-eight years, to make a declaration thereof upon the frontiers of Italy. See *Dictionnaire Univ. de la France*, par M. Robert de Hesselu, tom. i. p. 475.—This seems to me to be a little more positive than the Emperor's claim to Burgundy, yet for my part, I would willingly exchange the one for the other.

"It is remarkable," says the Emperor's writer, tom. i. p. 93. "that no mention was made of Dunkirk in the treaty
 " of the *Pyrenees*. This city, after it had been taken by the
 " French in 1651, was delivered up to the English by virtue
 " of a treaty between Lewis XIV. and Cromwel the Usurper
 " of the British crown. They kept it till 1662, when Charles
 " II. sold it to France for 5,000,000 livres. *The French have*
 " *been in possession of it ever since, without its having ever been*
 " *ceded to them by the house of Austria, which had the sole right*
 " *to dispose of it.*"

“ Governor-General of the Low-Countries, was the first
 “ person without the concurrence of the council of Spain,
 “ who

WE shall observe, notwithstanding this sharp decision, that the treaty of the *Pyrenees* is dated in 1659. The city of Dunkirk was conquered from the Spaniards by the French in 1646, under the command of the great Condé then Duke d'Enghien; it was retaken in 1651, by the Spaniards; recovered in 1658, by the French under Viscount Turenne, and delivered up to the English; it was in their hands at the time of the treaty of the *Pyrenees*, and they afterwards sold it to France, without any opposition on the part of Spain. A short time after this, the Dutch guaranteed the possession of it to that nation, in defiance of Spain, which contented itself with negotiating, and has not since claimed it. Have we not then a right to conclude that she has renounced Dunkirk?

IN fine, the new writer, M. Linguet, who enters the lists in favor of the Emperor, says, in No. 89, page 51, of the *Annales Politiques*.—“ And Lorrain, that true patrimony of
 “ the house of Austria regenerated—do not we (the French)
 “ possess it? Could we think of relinquishing it in exchange
 “ for Tuscany, independent of their value being equal, Francis yielded to us the cradle of his family, the territory that
 “ is the repository of the ashes of his ancestors, and we gave
 “ up to him only a domain that was foreign to us both.”—Without doubt, if conveniency alone is consulted, which seems to be the fundamental maxim of the Emperor's politics, Tuscany is not an equivalent; but in every other respect Tuscany is much more valuable than *Lorraine*, even with the addition of ashes of the Dukes of *Lorraine*. Besides, M. Linguet has forgot,

*“ who succoured the United Provinces. He sent them
 “ a corps of about ten thousand men, and this im-
 “ portant succour contributed effectually to preserve
 “ them from total destruction.”—Observe, that
 there is not the least shadow of truth in the last al-
 legation. The United Provinces owed their safety
 to their courage, to the season of the year, to the
 inundations, and to the presumption of Lewis XIV.
 “ Some time after,” that is to say, when the dan-
 “ ger was over, “ the Emperor Leopold put his
 “ troops in motion.” Thus, without noticing
 the absurdity of exacting from the Dutch so dan-
 gerous a testimony of gratitude, for a political
 service dated a century past, one may venture to
 pronounce even from the very facts related by the
 Emperor’s writer, whose motto seems to be, the*

NEC METAS RERUM, NEC TEMPORA PONO,
 of Jupiter, that the United Provinces do not owe
 any gratitude to the German branch of the house
 of Austria; every impartial reader will have al-
 ready asked himself the question, whether JOSEPH II.
 can say as much with respect to Holland. “ And

got, or, he never knew, that besides Tuscany, the Emperor
 must restore eleven millions of crowns, for the debts contracted
 by the house of Lorraine, and for the pension of four millions
 and a half paid to the present Emperor’s father for four years,
 till he took possession of Tuscany.

“ how

“ how if it had pleased these republicans puffed
“ up with pride, from success, instead of the
“ stagnation of the Scheld, and the ruin of the
“ inhabitants on its banks; to have demanded
“ the sterility of the adjacent countries, as well as
“ that of their river; if it had come into their
“ heads to order the inhabitants of Brabant, like those
“ of the Molluccas, to let their lands lie fallow, as well
“ as the vast canal whose border they inhabit,
“ and that the weak Philip IV. had submitted to
“ this farther vexation: the motion of a plough,
“ in the districts, struck with this anathema, would
“ have been an assault in the eyes of the Dutch,
“ and they would have made as much noise about
“ the opening of a furrow, as they have done
“ with so much eclat and justice about the pas-
“ sage of a boat.”

THE hinds on the banks of the imperial Scheld, are, without contradiction, in the number of the richest peasants, and of those who cultivate the most fertile lands in Europe, as M. Linguet himself acknowledges. *The lands in the provinces of Flanders*, says one of the most zealous partizans for the Freedom of the Scheld, are infinitely more

flourishing than they were in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the boasted æra of their manufactures (4). The stagnation of the Scheld, the deprivation of foreign commerce is then a misfortune, which these provinces have not felt, and their circuit is not struck with a very formidable anathema.

As to the declamations respecting the despotism of the Dutch, relative to the navigation of the Scheld, we have seen in our first letter, that the interdiction of this river was more the work of the masters of Antwerp, than of Holland. This stipulation far from being suggested by despotism, was an act of moderation and clemency, for the Dutch at the treaty of Munster, might have dictated the severest terms, and even have retained the Austrian Netherlands, or have continued the war; it was only terminated under the most solemn engagements, guaranteed by almost all Europe, that the navigation of the Scheld, from Antwerp

(4) SEE *Controversies on the Freedom of the Scheld, &c. &c.* The same author says, p. 21. that, by the attention of Colbert, France reckoned up in 1661, forty four thousand woollen looms: he adds with reason, p. 24. *That she is not so populous at present, as she was before the establishment of manufactures.* Once more then, is it not at least very doubtful, if the prosperity of the Austrian Netherlands depends upon the Freedom of the Scheld?

to the sea, should be shut up from all persons except the owners of its embouchures; there are few public rights better legalized (5).

BUT, suppose M. Linguet, who is so affected with the hard fate of the Molluccas and of their *fallow lands*, should by chance have imagined that nutmegs and cloves grow like potatoes? I really suspect that he thinks so. In the mean time, till he is better informed, I shall only observe, that the inhabitants of the Molluccas pay a tribute either in fruit, or the leaves of their trees, and cultivate their lands as they like, and as they can, so that these lands *do not lie fallow* owing to the Dutch.

I SHALL further observe, that if he would take the trouble to inform himself, instead of heaping up common place reports, he would not repeat all those declamations upon slavery invented by the Dutch, to secure to themselves the petty sovereignties of the Eastern Archipelago. The Dutch

(5) IN a word, it is not easy to comprehend, what could give M. Linguet a right, in the question concerning the Scheld, to say, p. 493—That *Tybor, Ternate, and Ceylon are climates proper for the propagation of aromatics, but not for that of reason, or of maxims of sound policy.*

not only are not the authors of that slavery, as ignorance supposes them to be, but they have softened that which they found established. The Portuguese who discovered the Indies, traded with them like conquerors, as the English have done since their *territorial acquisitions*. All the severe laws imposed upon the princes of India by the Dutch, the Portuguese, from whom the Dutch conquered those islands, had established before their time (6).

BUT above all, I shall principally remark, what has escaped the notice of others, but which is the real truth; that the Dutch, since they were freed from the Spanish yoke, have owed the prosperity of their country to their fisheries, principally to that of herrings, more than to their general coasting trade, or to the commerce of Japan and the Spice Islands, with which they have been so much reproached. The English have always viewed their fisheries with a jealous eye. The famous Sir Walter Raleigh, in a memoir presented by him to James I. (7) in 1618, tells that prince, that the

(6) SEE the Voyage of *Francis Pirard de la Val* to the East Indies, Maldives, Moluccas, &c.

(7) SEE a book intitled, *The Wealth of Great Britain in the Ocean*, printed in the year 1749, p. 17, &c.

Dutch employ every year, on the coasts of England, Scotland and Ireland (8) three thousand vessels, and fifty thousand men; that these three thousand vessels employ near nine thousand others, and fifty thousand more men by sea and land, either in the equipment, or victualling of the ships, or in curing, and transporting the fish to foreign countries, and bringing home merchandise in return. "This," says Raleigh, "is what enables the Dutch
"to build a thousand ships in a year, without a
"single tree in their country, and without articles
"to load an hundred: notwithstanding which
"they are in possession of twenty thousand vessels,
"and all employed." Raleigh valued the annual sale of the Dutch herrings in the different countries of Europe, at two million, six hundred and fifty nine thousand pounds sterling (9).

DR. Benjamin Worsley, secretary to the Board of Trade and Plantations long after the calcula-

(8) THE Dutch and the English at present fish for turbot on the same banks, at a small distance from the coasts of England: but the Dutch are so constantly successful, that it is they who supply the London markets. Such a continual success looks very much like superior skill.

(9) THIS memoir was quoted by the Pensionary De Wit in his *Political Maxims* in 1669.

tion of Raleigh, estimated the same fishery at three millions sterling. He computed that its produce surpassed that of all the manufactures and commodities in England : of all the manufactures in France, and of the annual returns in silver brought home to Spain by the galleons. De Wit has very justly asserted, that Antwerp was badly situated for the fishing trade, and that considering this circumstance, Amsterdam and the town of Zuyderzee, especially Enchuysen, had nothing to fear from its rivalry. The fishery then, which is the agriculture of the sea, has constituted and still constitutes the riches and splendor of Holland, contrary to the common opinion, which attributes it solely to the commerce of the republic; and this fishing trade cannot be forced from them. But let us continue our examination of M. Linguet's assertions.

“ THE Dutch, instead of displaying at Munster, the compassionate despotism of this hero, (the Emperor) too little celebrated, exceeded even that cruel despotism of him who interdicted the Carthaginians; they not only sacrificed whole provinces to their jealousy, but they exacted from a great king, that he should be the minister of this sacrifice: they forced him to promise, *that his children should be offered up with his own hand to that god, who from the bottom of*
his

“ his marshes unmercifully insisted not only upon the
 “ victims, but upon the manner of sacrificing them (1).”

Thus the worship of Satan, the children of the Carthaginians thrown into the furnaces of a sanguinary god, by their enthusiastic mothers, by the way, a very apocryphal trait of the sovereign of Syracuse, who ordered these sacrifices to be abolished; is what a man, whom several people of merit reckon in the number of good writers, has dared in a political work, to compare to the interdiction of the Scheld, and to the claims of the Emperor upon Holland! The immortal Joseph becomes under his pen, a new Gelon more *celebrated*, it must be confessed, if not more *renowned*! And these men, who have survived Rousseau, who read Fenelon and Bossuet, Buffon, Raynal, Thomas, and Chamfort, call these bombastic amplifications, these glaring falsehoods, style and eloquence! — With all my heart, this will do no harm to any one, but what may do mischief becomes very culpable, and such are the infidelities of a writer who enlarges, invents, or disguises facts, to stir up animosities already too much inflamed (2).

Now,

(1) ANNALES Polit. p. 473.

(2) This intention is apparent in twenty passages in M. Linguet's work. The following are two remarkable instances.

Now, when M. Linguet says, and it is his signal of victory, to which he constantly repairs in his invectives against the Dutch.—“ This interdiction—what is the present object of it? What are the pretensions of which a menacing fleet posted at the mouth of the Scheld, is the interpreter and the support? Is it an useful possession that they wish to appropriate, and to set a high value upon? Is it a precious enjoyment which it would cost them dear to renounce? Is it a favorable soil fertilized by their labour, (3) the productions of which they cannot resolve to sacrifice? Their resistance under these circumstances would be natural.—Let it be remarked: they themselves make no great account of the Scheld—possessors of the two

“ P. 153, it appears for certain, that in order to stop the Brig Lewis, the Dutch fired case-shot, they were determined not only to stop, but to massacre.—No. 89, p. 47, this war becomes on the Emperor’s part a kind of duel; it is an affair of honour, he must carry his point or perish in the attempt.”—This last sentence makes the hair of an honest man stand an end.

(3) SEE what we have said on the works performed by the Dutch to make the Scheld navigable.

“ mouths

“ mouths of this river, and of its course upwards
“ for several leagues, they foolishly neglect all the
“ advantages of it; they have not a single port in
“ its whole extent,” which is of itself one of the
most superb ports that ever it pleased nature to
gratify commerce and navigation with (4), —
and in a note, “ Flushing and Middleburgh be-
“ long to the sea, not to the Scheld. Like those
“ despots of Asia who lay waste immense tracts of
“ land belonging to themselves, to divest the ene-
“ my of all idea and hope of approaching them;
“ they have chosen for fear of rousing or feeding
“ the industry of their neighbours, to deprive
“ their own country of one of the most valuable
“ resources: they have preferred condemning to
“ a disgraceful inutility, a river, which alone is
“ worth all the entrepots of all Holland put to-
“ gether; rather than divide the least advantage
“ with their ancient brothers to whom they once
“ feigned to leave the entire property of it (5).—
“ It must be said without reserve: that this is a
“ spirit of destruction, and not of possession:
“ sacrifices of this kind are an attack against
“ nature herself, and unfortunately it is but too
“ much the genius and policy of these republi-

(4) P. 476.

(5) Page 477.

“ cans to multiply them (6). But what is still
 “ more ; the opening of the Scheld will not only
 “ affect the prosperity of Holland, but in a very
 “ slight degree, and that very distant ; but it is
 “ only to a small portion of these states, that this
 “ insensible and future injury can be done. From
 “ the instant, several of its provinces would reap
 “ a real and durable advantage from it. Zealand
 “ for instance, and all the neighbouring countries
 “ must gain by it (7).” When Mr. Linguet advances all these things, he makes phrases equally destitute of common sense and of truth, he accumulates ridiculous sophistries and criminal falsehoods, which a simple exposure of the local, and of the interior ramifications of the Scheld will instantly destroy. The chart prefixed to this treatise, the details of which are perfectly correct, above all (8) with respect to the Scheld, and very parti-

(6) *IBID.*

(7) P. 498.

(8) *THIS* chart differs some minutes from that of the Marquis de Courtenvaux, with respect to the situation of Rotterdam, which is a matter of perfect indifference to the question in agitation. As the Marquis took no observation, and the longitude assigned by M. Mossier from him, is only deduced,

particular considering the smallness of the scale, will render this exposition easy, and as it were palpable to the sight of every one. The reader who is but the least attentive, will be able to judge upon the first inspection of this sketch, (for its author calls it by that name) if it is true, that the Dutch do not make any great account of the Scheld, and whether it is their cupidity alone that is alarmed by the Emperor's claim.

In the first place, the town and port of *Terneuse* are situated on the western shore of the Scheld.

SECONDLY, in that quarter, there is a communication from the southern coast by the natural course of the river, or by canals, with all the towns of Dutch Flanders, which are so many ports, with the *Sas of Ghent*, *Axel*, *Philippine*, *Ysendik*, *Oostbourg*, *Ardenbourg*, and *Sluys*; and on this side are situated *Zwyn*, and the mouth of the *Sas*, expressly shut up by the treaty of Munster.

deduced, we have no right to dispute with M. de la Rochette, the position that he has given to this city. The part of the two Schelds, as well as all that surrounds it, is scrupulously exact, and prepared from the greatest and best charts.

PERMIT

PERMIT me to add, that there is not a single Dutch village, situated on either side of the Scheld or of its branches, that may not, strictly speaking, be considered as a port. That in these ports, whether belonging to towns or villages, though they only equip small vessels, barges and bylanders, either for interior coasting or the fisheries, nevertheless, it is still a very active navigation. thus we see, "how useless the Scheld is at present " to Zealand, and to all the provinces of Holland." Linguet, p. 498.

As for Flushing, it belongs to the sea, as much as Havre de Grace. The Scheld opposite Flushing is only one thousand, four hundred toises broad. The city of Middleburgh does not belong to the sea, because it is inland. By means of an artificial canal three quarters of a league long, which faces the sea, and of a natural canal, between the land of *Saint Joost*, and the Isle of Walcheren, of pretty near the same length; there is a communication with the famous road called the *Ramekens*, at the conflux of the *Vlaak* and the *Slow*. This *Slow*, upon which we find the port of *Veer* or *Ter-veer*, a natural canal, which joins the *Hondt*, or the western Scheld to the eastern near their mouths. The city of *Zierikzee* is the principal port upon
this

this last branch, and it is well known, that the celebrated Mondragon said, after he had taken it. "I have them, I am master of Holland." Between the two Schelds are comprehended the islands of Walcheren, of North and South Beveland, and the little isle of Wolfsdyk. Beyond these three islands are those of Schouwen, Overflakke, and Goree separated towards the South by natural canals as broad as those of the two Schelds with which they communicate. On the north side, they are washed by a large current which bears the names of *Haring Vliet*, *Holland Deip*, &c. at the mouth of which we meet with *Helvoetsluys*. From this branch there is a communication by internal canals, with the old Meuse, as well as with the Mereve quite to Rotterdam, Dordrecht, &c. &c.; and from thence to all parts of North and South Holland, Frizeland, &c. &c. And now behold, "*how very useless the Scheld is to all the provinces of Holland.*"

THE Scheld not only animates the islands of Zealand, and all the adjacent islands, as well as Dutch Flanders; but it is likewise the rampart of these islands, by furnishing the means of inundating the lands of Austrian Flanders and Brabant, when the Dutch are obliged to open their sluices,

to

to which the people of Amsterdam owed their safety in 1672. And observe once more, "*how very useless the Scheld is at present to the Dutch.*"

To permit a free entrance into this river, to foreigners, in the sense the Emperor demands it, is in fact to deliver up to them all the ports of the United Provinces, and not only all the ports but all the defences, all the ramparts. The dykes and the sluices would be at the mercy of the enemy. To seize on a sluice, or to pierce a dyke and drown the inhabitants of twenty villages would require only a serjeant and ten men. And yet, "*the opening of the Scheld would be but slightly prejudicial to the prosperity of Holland.*"

JUDGE by these details, if the resolution of the States General of the 9th of October, by which they publicly declared, that the opening of the Scheld is of the utmost consequence to the state, and intimately connected with the security and maintenance of the country! Decide, I say, whether this resolution is not founded upon just motives, and if the Dutch can be taxed with exaggeration in their apprehensions and complaints. In a word, read over again the paragraph in No. 88, where M. Linguet pretends to prove, that the opening of the Scheld would not be

so prejudicial to the Dutch as they seem to dread, and that in every point of view, they ought to prefer to a war; read once more, if you have the courage, and set a value upon his proofs; and then decide, "if in every sense, the opposition of the Dutch to the opening of the Scheld is, as M. Linguet says it is, only the effect of an unjust caprice, unreasonable in its very nature."

WITHOUT doubt the opening of this river, by restoring to Antwerp its communication with the sea, would do some injury to the commerce of Amsterdam (9), and no one ought to be surprised, that under these circumstances, without admitting other consequences; the Dutch oppose the claim

(9) THIS is not the first time that it has been said, that Amsterdam not only exclaimed more than any other city of Holland against the opening of the Scheld, but that she even opposed the city of Antwerp being one of the cities of the United Provinces. In the campaign of 1645, Frederick, Henry Prince of Orange, countenanced by the French army could have taken that city—but the province of Holland being jealous of that of Zealand, says the president Henaut (*Abregé Chronologique* p. 452.) prevented his laying siege to Antwerp, under the apprehension, that the trade of the port of Antwerp would ruin that of Amsterdam.

of the sovereign of the Roman Catholic low countries; for the interest of the Emperor, and even adding to it, that of the Czarina ought not to be an universal standard; so that, in order to make a country already very rich, and a city already very opulent, still better; a country and city that owe their prosperity to the industry of man, should be no longer any thing. But I repeat it again, the safety of Holland is at stake, and all other considerations ought to yield to it. But even if I should admit that the freedom of navigation demanded by the Emperor would be confined to the western Scheld, the consequences of allowing this claim would not appear to me the less alarming. Is it not visible to every one, that the Hondt once opened, the communication would be cut off, upon the slightest misunderstanding between the islands of Zealand and Dutch Flanders? Would not this boundary already closely pressed by the Emperor, be attacked on the other side, as soon as this prince had an inclination for it? Would not the Dutch be obliged to maintain there, at a very great expence, a more numerous military establishment than that which at present guards their Flemish possessions? Would not they be forced to take the same precautions throughout all Zealand, independent of ships and of armed pinnaces, which must be multiplied upon the river, or upon its branches,

branches, to oppose smuggling, the excursions of strangers, and future enterprises? With all these precautions, ruinous in their very nature, the Dutch would always be in the situation of Damocles at the table of Dionysius the tyrant. Let them do what they could to prevent it, they would be subdued in a few years. The Scheld once divided no longer appertains to them. The possessor of the Scheld becomes the master of Dutch Flanders, of Zealand and of Holland: it is a political axiom, and I repeat it without any danger of exaggeration — “The Dutch, if they prize their liberty ought to perish, rather than submit to the iniquitous demand of the Emperor.” If he succeeds, he may boast of having exterminated a people who had no other crimes but those of being rich, and of having maintained a right guaranteed to them by all Europe.

I SHOULD moreover like to know, what M. Linguet and the rest of the Emperor’s writers would say, if the Dutch, in order to terminate the dispute at once, should block up the Scheld at its entrance into their territories below Antwerp, for instance, opposite Fort St. Anne, where this river is only one thousand two hundred toises broad; and if they were to erect a dyke, which should entirely shut up all passages for ships. The enterprise
would

would not be without precedent, for Alexander Farnesse, Duke of Parma, when he laid siege to Antwerp in 1585, built such a dyke, to prevent the approach of ships to its relief (1), though it was reckoned impossible, and which, however, served as a model for that constructed afterwards by the Duke de Richlieu to block up the port of Rochelle.

WHAT would the heralds of the law of nature, the advocates for despotism say to such a measure?

(1) THE Prince of Parma's dyke was scarcely more than 600 toises long. A modern Historian, and from him, *the Historical and Political Memoirs of the Low Countries*, tom. i. p. 49. assert, that the people of Antwerp defended the place like the Tyrians, and that the Duke of Parma took Antwerp, as Alexander whose name he bore, took the city of Tyre. They might have cited an imitation, anterior to the siege of Antwerp, and perhaps not less singular, though not so well known as Alexander's enterprise. Carausius Governor of *Gessoriacum*, at present *Boulogne*, and commander of the Roman fleet under Dioclesian, having caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor, Chlorus one of the two Cæsars laid siege to *Gessoriacum* the arsenal of Carausius; wishing to prevent the fleet's assisting the city, and having no ships, he built a dyke before the port, which during the whole siege resisted the violence of the tides and of storms. There are but few things impossible to the man, who has the courage to undertake them.

Would

Would they have any other argument left than that of the cannon, which can only be answered by cannon; or which is much better, by the valour and invincible resolution of freemen?

BUT will not you, Sir, very soon be tired with so much ignorance, or perfidy? Well then, read only with attention, and I defy you to point out to me in these two famous numbers, a single page, which does not furnish some contemptible argument, or some stupid absurdity equal to those I have already exposed.

THUS for example, p. 478, M. Linguet informs us, when speaking of *the fetters of the Scheld, that cloves, and cinnamon are roots*.—(You see clearly, that I had guessed at this new discovery in the vegetable world in a former passage) he adds, that the Dutch *set fire to the harvests*, which could only defend themselves by water.

AGAIN, p. 479, he says, *do not regard the Scheld shut up and deserted, but look at the Texel open and populous*—because he all along supposes that no navigation is carried on in that Scheld, *destined by nature to become a second Neptune* (2).

(2) TOM. xii. No. 89. p. 29.

AND, p. 480, he contrasts *the seamen of the Pampus, with the Burgomasters of Antwerp*—as if the Pampus was a sea port (3). If M. Linguet had known, that the Pampus is the bar, the bank of sand and slime which covers the river Y, he would not have made use of this burlesque expression.

I SHOULD stop here without reluctance, assured of having said enough to dissipate the illusions which M. Linguet's work had given birth to, if attentive readers were not so scarce. But it is for those who believe men upon their bare words, when they advance things solely on their own authority, that I shall make some farther

(3) I MUST not pass over in silence, that other writers as well as M. Linguet have fallen into the same error, particularly the French translator of the Memoirs of John de Wit, (chap. viii. p. 40.) To the word *Pampus*, he has added in a note, which is the port of Amsterdam; but this error is not the less awkward for being repeated more than once. We shall now give a precise description of what the Pampus really is. A gulph of ten, or twelve leagues in extent, detaches itself from the south east part of Zuyderzee, and separates North Holland from South Holland. The entry of this gulph is called the *Pampus*; the other extremity the *Te*; the Pampus has scarcely any depth, it ought therefore to be considered as the bar of the Y, or *Te*; ships of war built at Amsterdam, pass the Pampus by means of machines called *camels*.

remarks

remarks on the discourse, which M. Linguet, without doubt, from the remains of his benevolence to his ungrateful country, has thought proper to insert in No. 89, that our ministers of state may be able to find it there, when they stand in need of it. He has done still better. That he may lavish upon them all his knowledge at once; he points out in this discourse, a long passage in his annals, which ought to be read in the council of state in France, where, however, it seldom happens, that a minister reads sixteen pages of a journal.

You understand me, Sir, for doubtless you must have remarked one of the strangest deliriums in No. 89 of the annals, that has ever signalized self-love. M. Linguet therein gives a speech, *supposed to have been made, or to be made by a minister of France* in the council of state. This discourse is evidently the work of M. Linguet, and he has not even attempted to disguise it; since he has entitled it made, or to be made; besides which, this discourse is the fulsome repetition, almost word for word, of his No. 88; and M. Linguet says of himself in this speech (4).

(4) P. 23.

“ BUT, Sire, as it has been very well demonstrated lately by a writer whom I esteem; whose
 “ conduct and works have always been irreproachable,
 “ but who has nevertheless undergone, apparently
 “ ly by your Majesty’s orders, very horrid treatment, of which he neither knows the cause, nor
 “ the excess.”—Then he interrupts this strange discourse by this no less unaccountable apostrophe (5).

“ Here the minister takes No. 88, of the annals,
 “ and reads the passage from p. 494, to 499; then
 “ he continues.—It would be difficult to cite such
 “ another instance of convulsive egotism and pride.
 “ But the absurdities of M. Linguet are of no
 “ consequence, they carry with them their own
 “ remedy; suffice it then to note his principal
 “ errors.”

It appears to me in the first place, that M. Linguet’s minister possesses very little logic, or address. For instance, he tells his master in order to divert him from supporting the Dutch, that their alliance is totally useless to France (6) and the

Chef-

(5) P. 27.

(6) *At present, what advantage does the alliance of Holland present to us? When were we ever able to fix any value upon it?*

In

Chef-d'œuvre of M. de Vergennes most assuredly is this alliance. Nothing is more easy to demonstrate; that minister no doubt could do it better than me, but I think I have sufficiently established it at the end of my second letter.

M. LINGUET's minister threatens us with Denmark accustomed, says he, to follow the impressions of Russia (7). Well then! so much the worse for Denmark, and so much the worse even by the confession of his minister, for he agrees that we shall have Sweden on our side. Besides, may not this event make the Danes lose at the first onset, the little islands of *St. Croix*, *St. John*, and *St. Thomas*, which they possess in the East Indies, without reckoning *Tranquebar* on the coast of *Comandel*, *Serampour* on the Ganges, and their little Moravian establishments in the islands of *Nicobar*, valuable enough for the Emperor, who aims at, and claims every thing, and is now actually taking

In the last century, at the beginning of this, their friendship was important, and their enmity formidable; they had forces then, but what use, Sire, did they make of them?—(and p. 38.) I believe I have demonstrated to you, Sire, that in this sense, they cannot serve us, but what is more, they may greatly injure us.

(7) Tom. xii. No. 89. p. 25.

measures with Denmark to obtain this establishment which is one of the best stations in the gulph of Bengal (8).

It is needless to mention, "*the circumcised despotism which makes the Dardanelles tremble,*" not that this is precisely the language of councils, nor of courts, nor of people of taste, and I wish to know what language M. Linguet, who formerly, and for a long time together, highly praised the Turkish government, will give at present, to the despotism of Vienna and Petersburg.

I SHALL say but little of "*the Crimea become Greek and almost Christian* (9)." I will only remind M. Linguet, that the Greeks are Christians, and that Christianity is not under much obligation to the Russians for the usurpation of Caffa, the major part of whose inhabitants were Christians before that usurpation. I will not speak of that Crimea become Greek and almost Christian, which, "*at the instigation of France may lose the fruits of its baptism, or at least run the risk of it.*" I prostrate myself in humble silence before this formidable bombast.

(8) P. 16.

(9) Ibid.

BUT I would not advise M. Linguet's minister to say in full council, that he dreads seeing, "*Zenobia triumphant at Constantinople, and walking upon the Mediterranean, perhaps upon our own coasts (1) with her fleets inimical, and her power justly incensed, which might fall upon us with the double weight of accumulated forces and increased reputation.*"

IN spite of ministerial gravity, one might reply by a very bitter stroke of raillery; for French wit is sometimes found even in the council of state. Boileau said to Lewis XIV.

I expect thee in two years on the banks of the Hellespont.

It is well known that *Buffy Rabutin* wrote at the bottom of this verse, *Tantara-rara*—if this note was not in the most exquisite taste, it was at least pleasant and sensible, and I believe sharp epigrams are still fabricated in France.

I DOUBT much whether his minister was more seriously attended to, if he presumed to say, "*that France owed her marine to the house of Austria.*" Certainly nothing could appear more extraordi-

(1) *IBID.*

(2) P. 39.

nary than this allegation. Immediately after the defensive treaty made with that house, France absolutely lost her marine; the unfortunate war that followed was terminated in 1762; a long repose was necessary for all parties, but above all for the house of Austria; and when she wanted to go to war again, on the subject of Bavaria, the cabinet of Versailles rendered her the greatest possible service by making for her, the peace of *Teschen*; if since the definitive treaty, that house has not attacked France indirectly, by wanting to destroy the present system of Europe, it must be imagined that it was only because it was necessary to prepare for it, by amassing treasures, and concerting measures with Russia to weaken and intimidate the Turks. She forces us into a war as soon as she can.

Thus it is not very easy to discover what obligation the marine of France is under to the Emperor.—It is in vain then that the minister insists (3) on the extraordinary utility of the defensive alliance of 1756; he alone can find in it, the foundation, the existence, and the growth of our naval force.

(3) In a separate and recent edition of M. Linguet's two Numbers (see our appendix, note iv.) considerable additions are made to this subject.

One has even a right to conclude from his allegations, that if we should once derogate from this treaty, our marine would instantly be annihilated, which gives room to imagine that M. Linguet has a promise from the English that they will attack us. Without wishing to penetrate his secret, we shall readily agree, because we pique ourselves upon sincerity, that without doubt, it would be much better for the French, in every respect, and at all times, to be well with the Emperor, not only for the sake of preserving their marine, but purely from the love of peace; however, if the French should be reduced to make their choice, between losing their marine, or suffering the Emperor to seize on the Scheld, that is to say on Holland; France ought not to balance a moment about sacrificing her marine, and opposing all her forces against the schemes of the Emperor, in order to preserve her superiority on the Continent, or rather her political existence, which on every account is preferable to her marine. We are well aware what numberless calamities would follow from it. But unfortunately, that trivial maxim which governs all human affairs—*Of two evils choose the least*, is also the great political axiom, and we make no doubt that the council of France will make a speedy use of it, even after they have read the sixteen pages of M. Linguet's Annals. In a word,
this

this writer proves to a miracle, in his two numbers, and in his pamphlet wherein he unites them, that the Dutch and the French possess the infallible means of having no war with the Emperor. The first by granting him all he demands; and the last by permitting him to do what he likes. Does not this remind us of the words of Henry IV. "You will never have any dispute, even with the devil, if you do but say as he says."

WHAT M. Linguet's minister says on the subject of Dunkirk, appears to us a little singular, and even absurd (4). "*The favourable opportunity presented itself, and we have seized it. Dunkirk is not yet risen from its ashes, because we did not want it, but we have recovered the right to raise it again whenever we please. Have we been just in that case? The Emperor in imitating us at present will be so. Have we been unjust? Then it appears to me, that we should be doubly so, in wanting to prohibit his imitating us.*"

THE council would reply to the minister, you forget, independent of contradicting yourself upon

(4) P. 21.

this subject (5), that we never thought of going to war for Dunkirk; and that Dunkirk never was proscribed in the manner you represent it. Only such works were demolished as the French do not want to restore, and a sluice, the current of which cleaned the harbour. Dunkirk, notwithstanding all these demolitions has continued to be a well frequented port, very commercial in time of peace, and during the war sending out several formidable privateers against the English. We got rid it is true, of the humiliating clause in the treaty of Utrecht. Another sluice now cleanses the port; the jetties are repaired when they sink down, or when tempests threaten to carry sand from the shallows over these jetties, into the channel. This without doubt is an advantage to Dunkirk, whose harbour is no longer so much exposed to the danger of losing its depth of water (6). But what

(5) *When the English nation stationed a commissary upon these ruins, instructed to exercise a haughty vigilance, and a cold inspection, she submitted to him only the works of art; she left the people of Dunkirk the free gifts of nature, the warlike basin was abandoned, but the mercantile port continued to be populous.* No. 89. tom. xii. p. 25.

(6) *In a Letter to M. Le Comte Buffon, or a Critical and New Essay on the Theory of the Earth, printed at Benfancou in 1780, we have the following passage.*

“ IN

what has any thing we did for Dunkirk, when the last war was resolved upon, to do with the Emperor's present claim upon the Dutch?

It is very difficult to approve of the following form of amplification in the mouth of a minister. *Eighty thousand men at the sound of their master's just indignation, have sprung forth from the forests of Bohemia. They march rapidly on to glory and vengeance; and they have left behind them, one hundred and fifty thousand more animated with the same spirit.* I say it is very difficult to approve this figure, for, after all there is not a word of truth; besides, the Em-

“ IN 1757, when the basin of Dunkirk was repairing
 “ I was in search of information upon this subject. I asked
 “ several questions, and the commanding officer of the works
 “ assured me, that the *sea had lowered* in the channel of the
 “ ancient sluice of *Vauban*, and that according to the records
 “ of the place, this diminution could not be estimated at less
 “ than eleven inches in seventy seven years, which is at the
 “ rate of an inch in seven years.”

THIS estimation appears to me to be too high, or rather, I am apt to believe, that this extraordinary decrease is occasioned by local circumstances. There is nothing more certain, however, than that all the ports of the Germanic ocean, as well as that sea itself, lose their depth annually, and that in a more remarkable manner than any other ports, or seas.

peror

peror would do much better to employ these two hundred and thirty thousand men in clearing their forests, than in ravaging the borders of the Scheld, or drowning themselves in it, if they are suffered to get there. It is highly probable, that if ever the Emperor enters Flanders *with his eighty thousand men* sprung from the forests of Bohemia, what was said by the buffoon of Francis I. when he was preparing for his expedition to Italy, will be applied to him with much more reason. “ *I see clearly how thou wilt enter the country, but I cannot for the soul of me conceive how thou art to get out of it again.*”

Sire, continues the minister, *what troops?*—and he forgets after all, that these troops have only opened one campaign in twenty-two years,—*complete corps!* and the minister forgets that desertion, according to all reports, was beyond example, as soon as they began to march, insomuch that the Emperor hath just been obliged to renew the punishment of death for that offence, at the same time rendering this law, before reproachful, more severe, by all the refinements of a despotism equally cruel, impotent, and enraged (7).

I AM

(7) It must be acknowledged, that the King of France, who grants a general pardon to his deserters without even exacting that

I AM afraid, that at this question,—“ *Is the*
 “ *prince against whom the Dutch would arm, sullied*
 “ *with any of those usurpations which with reason*
 “ *shock the parties interested, which justly alarm his*
 “ *neighbours, which deservedly scandalise distant spec-*
 “ *tators?*”—all the friends of humanity will cry
 out with indignation —“ Ask the insulted Turks,
 “ the invaded Polanders, the Hungarians, whose
 “ blood still gushes, and who, under the swords
 “ of the executioners, call to witness the manes
 “ of Matthew Corvin; ask the impaled Walla-
 “ chians.” What can be a more just motive for
 alarm, than the whole conduct of the Emperor?
 The sudden invasion of Bavaria by the troops of
 the house of Austria in 1778, roused all the
 powers of Europe who were guarantees of the
 treaty of Westphalia, and put four hundred thou-

that they shall return to their respective regiments, has neither
 the same humanity, nor the same policy as the Emperor. I
 know not whether it is for want of having travelled, or because
 he has not written pastoral letters, that he has never taken it
 in his head, to order that the consuls of villages where sediti-
 ous people are found should be impaled, or to re-establish the
 pains of death for deserters; but if it be so, I supplicate Heaven
 that neither a desire to travel nor to be a wit, may ever possess
 our princes.

and

sand men in arms ; with what justice can any man dare to speak against the King of France, whose mediation finished that short war, and who decided against the Emperor ; and with what justice can any man presume to speak to him of the moderation of a prince, who wants to set all Europe in flames.

WHAT honest man could possibly remain silent if he was to hear the incendiary minister hold this odious language.—

MAY it please your Majesty to have a relation made to him of the negotiations of *Gertruydenberg*, we will then see with what pride with what refinement of inhumanity those despotic republicans trod upon the neck of your great grand-father, prostrate at their feet, of an imprudent (8) but unfortunate prince, respectable however for his age, for his misfortunes, for his former successes, and even in his humiliation. From compassion to his people he sued for favour and peace, he dictated it in the most humiliating terms, and he ac-

(8) THIS is certainly the first time that this epithet has been given to Lewis XIV.

cepted them. The conquerors wanted to have it at once disgraceful and criminal (9).

EVERY well informed and sincere person will repel these odious declamations by drawing the parallel of the proceedings of Lewis XIV. against the Dutch. Admitting that they alone had imposed that condition on the great king, would not the treatment they had met with from him have excused them? Doubtless they would have had only this plain answer to make—"Ought we to have any compassion for ambitious tyrants, when they meet with a reverse of fortune in the pursuit of their projects?"

It was in 1710, that the conferences of Gertruydenberg were held, thirty-eight years after the invasion of Holland by Lewis XIV. and the inexpressible insolence of his prime minister, never to be forgotten. We know at present, what were the true causes of that detestable war (1); for
time

(9) IN the new edition of his two numbers M. Linguet has placed a note, in which growing warm against the Dutch, he declares that they alone were guilty of the inhumanity. See Appendix, note iv.

(1) WE must here observe, what has not been sufficiently noticed, that this war would have lasted only a single campaign,
if

time reveals every thing, even the falsehoods and the motives of writers who want to deceive. The following were the causes equally atrocious, absurd and frivolous.

THE Dutch, who by every species of industry had amassed invaluable riches, were under great apprehensions, especially after the French had applied themselves to commerce, that they should see the rest of Flanders fall into their hands, together with that Antwerp, formerly, according to the expression of Pelisson in his history of Lewis XIV. *the magazine of the great, and universal merchandise it had brought to its port.* They beheld the successes of France with a jealous eye, and considered that kingdom, governed by an ambitious prince, who seemed to place his personal glory in inspiring terror, as a very formidable neighbour (2).

WHEN

if the moderate advice of M. de Pomponne had been taken, who wanted the King to be satisfied with the immense advantages offered to him by the Dutch, and to have fallen upon the Catholic Low countries, in order to punish the King of Spain, for the infraction of the treaty of Aix la Chapelle by the Comte de Monterey, in assisting the Dutch, without the consent of that monarch.

(2) THE grand pensionary de Wit had formed a plan to divide the Catholic Low-countries with France, and this great

K

design

WHEN the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1688, had for a moment disarmed all Europe, which the imperious policy and unconquerable pride of Lewis XIV. was soon to unite in arms against him, it put a stop to hostilities but not to recollections and animosities, which are always reciprocal. Multiplied successes had enervated the Dutch. This is a natural evil in republics, where every one having a share in public affairs, exaggerates freely, under the fine name of a patriot, what he thinks he has done for his country. Look at the English after the peace of 1762, and to speak of absolute monarchies, whose insolence is far more disgraceful to the human race, look at the cabinet of Versailles after the peace of Nimeguen.

WHEN the treaty of Aix la Chapelle was signed, the Dutch caused a medal to be struck with this inscription. *Affertis legibus, emendatis sacris, adjunctis defensis, conciliatis regibus, vindicatis marium libertate, pace egregia virtute armorum parta, stabilita orbis Europei quiete, numisma hoc status fœderati Belgii cudi fecerent, MDCLXVIII (3)*

THIS

design would have prevented many calamities, but the success would never have answered the attempt.

(3) UPON the medal of 1688, was likewise a figure of Pallas holding a sceptre, and trampling upon Discord, with these

THIS work enraged the sovereigns, because it was the act of a republic; but are the medals of kings less pompous? and what sovereign is there who has not adopted this exaggerating style of the vulgar *laté regem*, to which some years since, even the majesty of the people of England was compared. Lewis XIV. already enraged to see the Dutch contest haughtiness with him, was no doubt still more exasperated by the cowardice of his courtiers. Van Bauninghen, who had given umbrage in his embassy at the court of France, was accused of having secretly caused a medal to be struck, which represented Joshua ordering the sun to stand still, with this inscription from the Bible, *stetit itaque Sol*, in order to insult the king, whose device was a sun, with this legend, *nec pluribus impar*. At the same time, the writers of gazettes expressed in warm terms, the universal hatred in which a domineering king was held, who made himself more enemies by his ostentation than by the abuse of his power. Then the ruin of Holland was sworn.

these words,—*mitis et fortis*, and underneath, *procul hinc mala bestia regnis*. The reverse represented the Belgic Lion holding a cannon with his talons with the legend *sic fines nostros rutamur et undas*, underneath which was the above-mentioned inscription *assertis legibus*, &c.

A FOOLISH medal, a satyrical allusion to the motto of Lewis XIV. the licentiousness of Gazetteers; these were the circumstances which gave rise to the project of destroying a whole nation; these were thought sufficient motives to justify those vile intrigues which the pride of an enraged *magnanimous* monarch disdained not to engage in, and for which he was censured by every honest man in his kingdom; even in the zenith of monarchical idolatry (4).

“ LEWIS XIV.” says Voltaire, “ did every
 “ thing that the efforts of ambition and human
 “ prudence could suggest to accomplish the de-
 “ struction of a nation. There is no example
 “ on record, of a small enterprize preceded by
 “ more formidable preparations. Of all the con-
 “ querors who have invaded any part of the world,

(4) ON the 6th of April 1672, the king ordered his declaration of war against Holland to be published and fixed up in Paris, and as there was not any sufficient motive assigned in this declaration, for undertaking so expensive a war, which was likely to last many years, every body was of opinion, that Louvois would have done better not to have published such a declaration, by which his master had the discredit of being an *angry, unjust, mischievous* neighbour. *It is a new species of injury to offer bad reasons to the public.* *Annal. Polit. de L'Abbe St. Pierre.* Tom. i. p. 256.

“ not

“ not one ever began his conquests with so many
 “ regular troops, nor with so much money as
 “ Lewis employed to subjugate the little states of
 “ the United Provinces.” We know very well
 what were the principal measures, which the *prudence* and *magnanimity* of this great king dictated to him.

THE king of England's sister, a princess of twenty-six years of age, appeared at her brother's court in the character of plenipotentiary from Lewis the Great. The beautiful *Kesout*, afterwards Dutchess of Portsmouth, who accompanied her, was destined to captivate the weak Charles II. and to conclude the negociation. The princess remained in England no longer than till she had given the fair *Briton* time to seduce the heart, and the senses of the voluptuous monarch; she soon returned to France, leaving her full powers with the new favourite, assisted by the Marquis de Croissi.

CHARLES signed the treaty presented to him by his mistress. Croissi, who had drawn it up, and who in his dispatches to France, speaking of the English ministers, says, *I have made them sensible of the extent of the king's liberality* (4); obtained a promise

(5) BARILLON, who succeeded Croissi, very soon became the new treasurer of Lewis XIV. at London.

that that prince would attack the Dutch with all his naval forces, and the fair *Kerout* guaranteed the execution of it, in consideration of certain pensions with which the court of France was to reward her good offices, and the interested zeal of Charles. The amours and intrigues of that dangerous beauty, her empire over the king, the most corrupt man of that age—these were the master strokes of French policy to secure success in a most unjust war. Such was the principal instrument of the resentments of the magnanimous Lewis.—If the Dutch who regorged with gold and precious stones, had vouchsafed to lavish them upon Mademoiselle de Kerout, and upon the Sovereign whose alliance she bought and sold: if they had opened their treasures to have made themselves masters of his venal court; most assuredly Lewis would have been obliged to submit to a disgraceful peace, instead of dictating the conditions of that of Nimeguen. The skill of the French generals, the goodness of their troops, and the presence of the monarch supported his reputation against the faults of his ministers, and the effects of his own presumption. The merciless Louvois rejected all the propositions of Holland; he even refused to dictate the terms of peace. Holland, was reduced to the same extremity as *Carthage* after the
battle

battle of *Zama*. More was required from her than the first Scipio ever demanded from that rival of Rome (6). He demanded cities and fortresses in the heart of the country; he insisted that the Dutch should yield to him all their high roads, and keep them in good order, and that no passengers having the passport of France should pay any contribution towards the expences, nor any tolls or custom-house duties for their merchant-dise. He insisted that this phantom of a republic, which his clemency permitted to subsist, should send him annually by the hands of ambassadors, a gold medal, on which should be engraved, "That the seven provinces held their liberty from "Lewis XIV." The restoration of the Roman Catholic religion; and the payment of Thirty millions of livres as an indemnification for the charges of the war, were to be the preliminaries of this extraordinary treaty, and only ten days were allowed for an answer. — Surely this was punishment enough for the liberties taken by wretched gazette writers, for a medal, the die of which the states had ordered to be broken almost

(6) LET it be observed, to the eternal honour of Amsterdam, that she alone declared against any treaty whatever.

instantly, to appease Lewis XIV. and for another satirical medal which never existed (7).

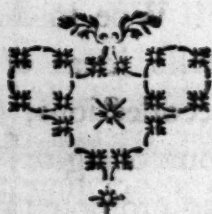
COMPARE this conduct with that of the Dutch at Gertruydenberg, and then have the assurance to call for justice, or revenge.—The event is well known, and the Dutch cannot too often recollect it, especially at the present moment. The invasion had surprised them and damped their courage, indignation reanimated them, all parties united, despair and inundations saved the Dutch, notwithstanding the generals, the troops, and the presence and ambition of Lewis XIV. which were equal to any thing of the kind that can be offered by Joseph II.

No doubt Lewis XIV. was a great man, but Cæsar was still greater, and what honest man does

(7) “ *The superb medals, with the continual railleries and*
 “ *insults of the writer of the Amsterdam Gazette, facilita-*
 “ *ted the belief of the imaginary medal attributed to Van Buen-*
 “ *ingen, whose frothy speeches, which passed for audacity,*
 “ *made every thing credible,*” p. 72, and besides, p. 70. “ *this*
 “ *medal was never seen, neither did it ever subsist but in the ima-*
 “ *ginations of those who invented it.*” *Memoires pour servir à*
 “ *l’Histoire de Hollande, par Louis Aubery des Maurier, Paris*
 edit. 1688.

not detest Cæsar? Lewis XIV. was a great man, and all the illustrious scourges of the earth were great men, but they merit only the execrations of mankind. Lewis XIV. was great, but it was that kind of grandeur which grieves and dishonours humanity. And all Europe bears witness to sentiments, and even to actions of Lewis XIV. which merit its esteem, and the eulogiums of posterity more than all the victories and all the majestic dignity of Lewis the Great. Woe be to that inconsiderate, or perverse minister, who should propose such a model to a young king, who hitherto has made his conscience his judge, his witness, his friend! Woe to the man who would inspire him with false ideas of glory, or possess him with hateful recollections, or schemes of revenge! There is but one glory becoming a King of France, that is to promote the happiness of his own country, and to support universal peace. Let this happy monarch cultivate, let him people his kingdom; let him restore to his subjects, who idolize him, their political and civil liberties, and then let him bid defiance to all the powers of the earth! or rather let him be their revered arbitrator and moderator. Such is his duty, such is his happiness, such is his destination. May he fulfil it for his own personal happiness.

happinefs, and for that of nations! and perish the fophifts and ambitious men who infest the earth, rather than the founder of American liberty should remain a quiet spectator of the invasion of Holland, or meanly desert her cause!



LETTER



LETTER IV.

*How the Navigation of the Scheld may be opened
without any danger to Holland, or to Europe.*

I SHALL conclude, Sir, by submitting to the judgment of the friends of liberty, a simple and infallible plan for opening the navigation of the Scheld without danger or injustice, and for carrying the prosperity of the Roman Catholic Low-countries to its highest pitch. Let these ten provinces favoured by nature, who particularly destined them to be free (8), form themselves into confederate states. Let them set themselves free

(8) *Horum omnium* (Gallorum) says Cæsar, *fortissimi sunt Belgæ.*

from the yoke of kings, from the deplorable necessity of being involved in their bloody quarrels, from being molested by their deliriums; and on this condition, let the rivers and seas be opened to them! If they had embraced this noble and wise resolution sooner, what torrents of human blood might have been prevented! If the *seventeen* provinces of the Netherlands had become independent at the same instant, they would have formed a republic capable of resisting the rest of Europe, and the commerce of the whole universe would have belonged to them.

LET the Roman Catholic Low-countries once become independent, and since the Flemings and the people of Brabant will have foreign commerce at any rate, though it has ruined so many empires, and never yet rendered a single nation happy; since these honest, peaceable, easy, and even opulent husbandmen, who cultivate one of the finest countries in the universe, from which the other nations of Europe first received their notions of good husbandry (9); since, I say, these fortunate colonists, weary of their happiness, will have

(9) To begin with the English. See, a book intitled *Hartlib's Legacy*.

commerce, they may then carry it on very extensively, and perhaps, more so than any other people in the world. They will frankly enter into treaties of peace, of union, of navigation, of barter with their neighbours: they will not be any longer subject to the partial and legionary views of the German cabinet, they will enjoy a profound peace, which the politics of the king of Hungary cannot disturb: they will no longer know what it is to be at war, and they will preserve from it, all the adjacent countries of Europe.

THE Low-countries are in a more favourable situation than Holland itself to form a republic. They have the advantage of the experience and instructions of three centuries. Enlightened by the example of the Dutch, and of the Americans, they will easily frame for themselves a constitution which will surpass all other human institutions; they will form a better combination than any yet extant of rights and duties, of order and liberty, of laws and authority; they will organise the legislative power with more forecast and equality; they will separate it more carefully from the executive power, they will fix it with more precision, they will clear its path and circumscribe its limits; they will more especially bring about by a
general

general union of the provinces amongst themselves, a coalition, a fusion of all parties which shall form one body, a *single one*, and homogenous, of which no federated state has yet offered a model (1).

THIS new republic would have no occasion for a statholder, for that fatal institution which has caused so many intestine divisions in Holland; divisions which brought it to the brink of ruin in 1672, which have involved it in a number of iniquitous and ruinous wars, and particularly the last, in which its honour, its interests, and its safety were sacrificed by the most cowardly treachery; divisions, which, to say no more, constitute their greatest danger at this hour. These great misfortunes of Holland were closely connected with the nature of things. A state of war almost perpetual, which it is impossible to fear at present, especially for the Low-countries at so great a distance from the Sovereign whose yoke they wanted

(1) It is one of the greatest faults amongst those with which M. Turgot reproaches the American constitutions in the truly admirable letter he wrote upon this subject in 1778, to his worthy correspondent Dr. Price; a letter which I have just given to the public in another work—*On the order of Cincinnati*.

to throw off; and almost continual war with Spain, rendered a military chief essentially necessary for the United Provinces. The house of Nassau-Orange, which down to William III. presents an uninterrupted succession of able generals and profound politicians, had contributed more than any other to the safety and defence of the liberty of Holland. Rich, powerful, respected, in a manner equal to kings, it wanted to arrogate their power, and to render it perpetual. From thence arose parties, intrigues, cabals, discord, legal assassinations of true patriots, vengeance arising out of vengeance; the decline of the state, and of liberty.

THE inhabitants of the Roman Catholic Netherlands happily have no such family, and this is an immense advantage that they have over Holland. The social hierarchy amongst the Flemings is founded rather upon their manners and customs, than upon oppressive laws; the feudal system is hardly known there. The commons and the aristocracy united under uniform laws, have almost equally the same advantages to gain by liberty; and it is, perhaps, the first instance in which the nobility cannot be hurt by it. The phrenzy of religious quarrels is over with them; but it was not so with the United Provinces, when
their

their confederacy took place; the prejudices of the Catholics, closely attacked by universal toleration, are weakened; and this was one motive more not to strike with violence at what reason was on the point of destroying by the assistance of mild persuasion. The Catholic Low-countries are populous, rich and well cultivated, compared at least with other countries; their manners are likewise pure and simple (2). Thus it is evident, that the poverty and conception of the people does not proceed either from superstition, or a superabundance of Monasteries, Abbies and Chapters (3), as has been so repeatedly asserted. Besides the

(2) If there was any doubt of it, we might refer to Mr. Linguet's description, who thinks he can thus prove the necessity of making these provinces the theatre of war, that they may become still richer.

(3) I PREFER a convent of Nuns to a regiment of soldiers. If the first oppose the intentions of nature, they do not tear her to pieces: if they violate their institution, it is in order to perpetuate their species; whereas the latter take an oath to destroy them upon the first signal given by despotism. The internal revolutions which the Emperor has effected in his dominions have been greatly applauded; but what a number of objections might be brought against the eulogiums; at least, the Panegyrist of Joseph II. ought to tell us, what justice they find

the desire of burying themselves in convents will soon subside, when the people are no longer subject to slavery, nor poverty, to military ordinances, nor to an oppressive load of taxes. There are in the Low-countries, Catholics who possess privileges, franchises (4), courage, principles of liberty : in a

find in driving a citizen from the profession which he has embraced under the sanction of the laws. I will tell them plainly, there is as much injustice in expelling a friar, or a nun from their retreat, as in turning a private individual out of his house. Despise the friars as much as you will, but do not persecute them, but above all, do not rob them, for we ought neither to persecute, nor rob any man, from the avowed Atheist down to the most credulous capuchin. One of the greatest misfortunes attendant upon these masters of the world is, that they always want to make their subjects happy (much happier say they, than they were) in their own way. When it is sufficient only to order, to be obeyed, they are apt to lose themselves in a labyrinth of contradictions.

(4) THEIR chief privileges are, that the people cannot be loaded with taxes without the consent of the states of the provinces, consisting of the prelates, the nobles, the inferior clergy, and the deputies from each city. Every man must be judged by his own competent judge, established time out of mind in the place of his residence, to administer justice. —No person can be evoked in a cause out of his own country, for instance to the court of Rome, &c. See, *Memoires historiques et Politiques des Pays-Bas Autrichiens*, &c. Tom. 2. ch. 25.

L

word,

word, few countries are better prepared to produce a race of men perfectly independant.

LET then the ancient Belgæ, whom Cæsar distinguished from the rest of the Gauls, aspire to that honour; let them be assured that nothing is wanting to make them free, but their own resolution to be so, and that no people were ever conquered but through their own fault.

BESIDES, they will be succoured and assisted. All their neighbours are either interested in their independence, or have no contrary interest.

GERMANY would incontestibly reap the greatest advantages from the freedom of the Low-countries. The two principal powers which threaten its liberty would then be nearly equal, and held in a due equilibrium. The Emperor being once weakened by the alienation of the Netherlands, the organization of the Germanic constitution, without which he could not long subsist, would be more easy, and perhaps, this is the only method of establishing it. The states that are situated on the great roads of Bohemia and Moravia, from Austria to the Low-countries, would be delivered for ever from the passage of the imperial troops, who ravage them whenever the Emperor has a
mind

mind to march an army to Flanders, notwithstanding the so much boasted discipline of the Austrian troops. The circles are not less afraid of this passage than the inhabitants of the country villages, because the stipulations entered into between them are but badly fulfilled, and the country not having provisions equal to its population, the passage of the troops produced dearth and sometimes a dearth (5).

THOSE weak neighbours of the Low-countries, the bishop of Liege, the electors of Cologne (6) and of Treves, and the elector Palatin, have a direct real interest in this revolution. They would acquire equal number of commercial benefits, and of political connections, which would

(5) I know that it will be objected to me, that it circulates money in the circles; but it is this very money which it is not so easy to obtain. Look at the circle of Franconia, which at this instant makes a demand upon the Emperor for the payment of forage in ready money, while the Imperial minister is negotiating to avoid it.

(6) It is possible, that family reasons may induce the present elector of Cologne, the Emperor's brother, to oppose this arrangement; but such an opposition, considering the weakness of his means, would only be an unsuccessful claim.

no longer be dependant on the private interests of the Emperor.

It principally imports France, England, Holland and Prussia to effect this great revolution.

THE house of Brandenburg would gain by it a very beneficial branch of commerce, and a durable peace for the Prussian dominions in the neighbourhood of the Austrian Netherlands. It would give perpetual stability to its power, and diminish for ever that of its formidable enemy, who, for several years has been hoarding up vengeance in his breast,

ENGLAND would negotiate and secure for herself the most advantageous and extensive treaties of commerce. She would procure immense resources for supporting and diminishing the intolerable burthen of her national debt, which distresses, and consumes her. She would reject for ever, as useless in future, and even impracticable, at least for her, all continental wars, which have already almost ruined her, which sooner or later will destroy her civil liberty, in the same manner as it has crushed her political liberty.

THE

THE United Provinces would no longer have any thing to fear from the opening the Scheld. It would then be an object for negociation, not a law imposed by the strongest. The United Provinces by granting this navigation to the Belgic states, would at least no longer have to dread, neither invasion, nor conquest, nor the introduction of the ships of a foreign power. The Netherlands would give an equivalent in the trade of their provinces, which would indemnify Antwerp for a slight sacrifice. The Dutch republic would preserve its liberty for ever, and infinitely increase its power.

IN fine, France to whom the friends of humanity owe many thanks and eulogiums for having founded the United States of America, would complete its glory, by favouring the establishment of the Belgic confederacy; she would gain by it, a permanent tranquillity upon her frontiers so often laid waste, and which for the future sheltered from all attack, would no longer stand in need of that triple girdle of strong places, the maintenance of which, with their garrisons, costs immense sums, and are a perpetual object of inquietude; she would give herself perpetual allies, whose commerce and marine would in some measure become her own, since the safety, the opulence,

opulence, and the happiness of the two powers, would be the indissoluble chain of their union.

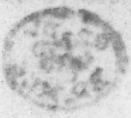
MONTESQUIEU has said, that deserts are the necessary barriers of vast dominions (7).—Ah! my God! what an expression! what a principle! what an idea!—Montesquieu said this because he saw things were actually in this state—I would esteem a man just as much, who, having been plundered by robbers on the highway, should declare that robbers are necessary for the police of a great kingdom; and those who have maintained, that without wars, an excessive population would overburthen and desolate the earth, and therefore, that wars are necessary, reason in the same manner as Montesquieu, when he wrote this axiom.

REPUBLICS! Republics! these are the proper frontiers to monarchies, if we would not convert the latter into immense prisons destined to torture, and degrade mankind, for the good pleasure of a

(7) As republics provided for their common safety by uniting, so despotic states do the same by separating from each other, and standing, as we may say, alone; they sacrifice a part of the country, ravage the frontiers, and make them deserts; that the heart of their dominions may become inaccessible, *Esprit des loix*, l. 9. ch. iv.

few executioners. These republics, if they only keep war, which would be their ruin, at a distance, cannot but add to the prosperity of their neighbours.

WHEN will human policy have a tendency to promote this prosperity? When will it sincerely put an end to wars, the very successes of which are dreadful misfortunes? When will it proceed upon the more reasonable plan of depriving tyrants of every occasion, of every pretext, and of all the means of undertaking them? When will it earnestly entertain an inclination to establish a peace founded upon one common interest, a permanent peace, which next to liberty is the most desirable thing on earth. I know not whether this day will ever shine upon humanity, but if any thing could hasten the dawn of it on our unfortunate Europe, it would, without doubt be, the founding of the Belgic republic; and since changes of circumstances and the right of convenience ought to cancel treaties; there is not any one which France, England and Holland has more reason to annul, than that which subjects the Netherlands to the Emperor. Politicians will doubtless object, that such a revolution would give to France a new degree of power, by procuring for her a perpetual ally
and



and friend in the low-countries, instead of a neighbour at all times indifferent, sometimes evil disposed, and often an open enemy.

BUT are not the Netherlands at present open to France, does she not seize upon them whenever she pleases, does she not canton troops in them, does she not levy money and soldiers in them? are they not more open to her than ever, since the demolition of the barrier fortified places, in defiance of treaties? which will be better for Europe, to leave them at the mercy of France, or to see them form themselves into a republic independent of France, and the friends of all Europe, except the Emperor? Certainly it is much better that the Netherlands should be free, and if it is in the power of men to establish a political balance, useful and durable; they must begin and by this great and salutary revolution.

MAY the Belgic confederacy establish itself, may it embellish, console, edify, and instruct the universe! right permits, justice prescribes it, policy orders it. The house of Austria will have wherewithal to console itself. The constant rival of the house of Bourbon, whose ascendancy places it upon thrones, it will fulfil its destination. The house of Bourbon supplies kings; the house of Austria queens.

TU FELIX AUSTRIA NUBE.



